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RESULTS!**

JULY 1994

Wrestling

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FUTURE:



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BRET HART:
WRESTLING PHYSIQUE
OF THE FUTURE**

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Founder

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Sincerely Yours

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COMPUTER TAG?

I really enjoyed the April 1994 issue, mostly because of the 16-man computer tournament. Are there any plans for a tag team computer tournament? I would pick The Rock 'n' Roll Express over any team in the world.

How on earth did that computer pick Tracey Smothers over The Undertaker, and why wasn't Rick Steamboat or Steve Austin included? I would have picked Ric Flair to win the tournament, but Rick Rude is a good choice.

SHANNON STEWARD
Savannah, MO

IT'S RUDE, DUDE

Am I dreaming? Someone (actually, something—a 486DX-66 computer) has finally given Rick Rude his due, told the truth about the “Ravishing One.” He is the best wrestler in the ring today.

Your cover said I wouldn't believe who won. Guess what—I do believe. If you take away front-office politics, imbecilic crowd support for unworthy “good guys” and the oh-so-opportunistic managerial assistance at ringside, the best wrestler will win out.

Your cover said I wouldn't believe how the match was won. I believe Rude has the stamina and scientific skills to last through a

16-man tournament. He has the street savvy and cunning to avoid costly errors, and to set up mistakes (such as Bret Hart's missed clothesline) for his opponent. Rude also has the rare ability to absorb pain when lesser men would submit. This is how he was able to fend off three “sharpshooters” in the tournament final.

Your cover shots left something to be desired. Rude wins the tour-

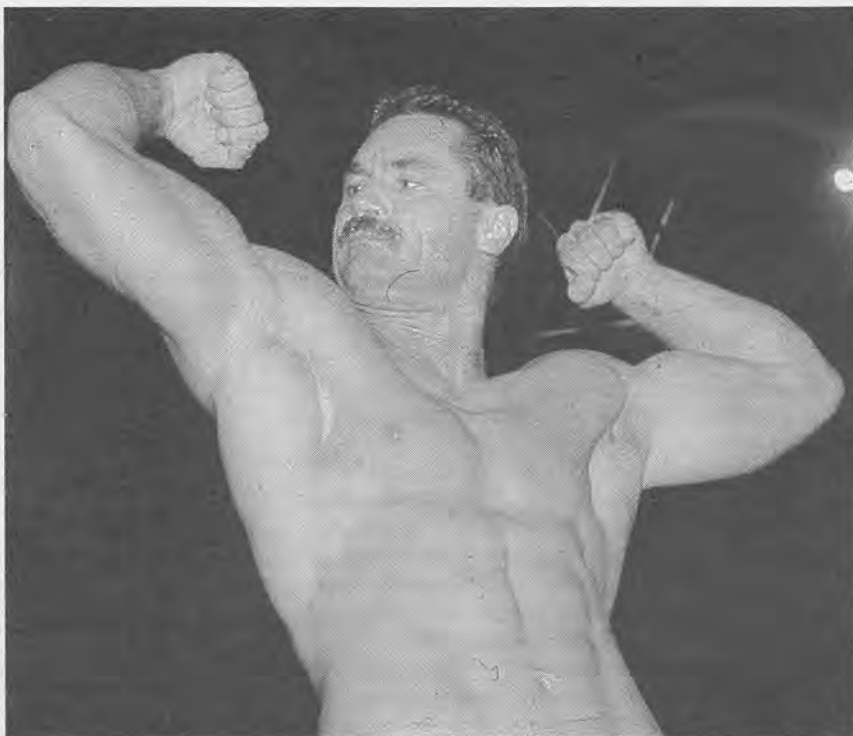
namment, and you run five other guys' photos. One lost in the quarterfinals, and the other four didn't get past the first round. You owe the “Ravishing One” a cover.

STEVE BROWN
Louisville, KY

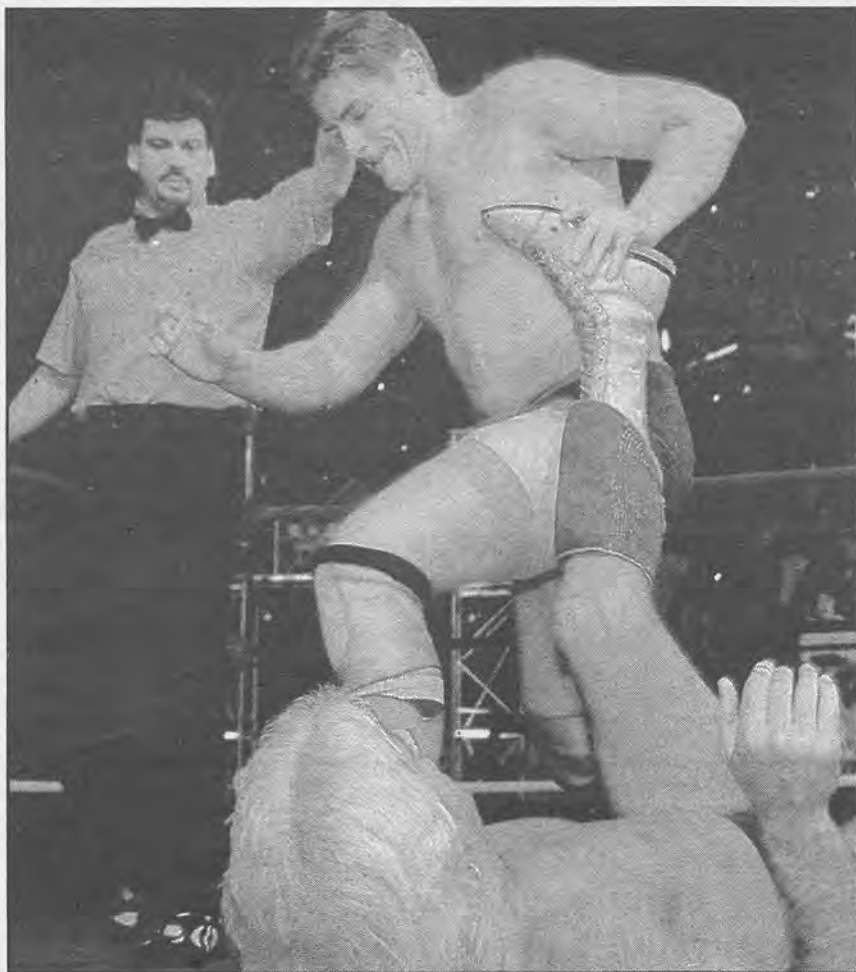
BROCK-BASHER

I still can't believe the derogatory comments Matt Brock made about Germany (“Matt Brock's Plain Speaking,” February 1994). That he doesn't like our country is one thing, but to say German wrestling fans only like Lex Luger because he has blue eyes and blond hair is absolutely ridiculous. The publishers of *INSIDE WRESTLING* should replace this racist as soon as possible.

In most of your magazines, I read articles saying that you don't like Yokozuna or Ludvig Borga because they insult the USA, and I



Rick Rude's victory in the *Inside Wrestling* computer tournament didn't surprise reader Steve Brown. He calls Rude savvy and skilled enough to win such an event in real life.



Even people who don't like Lord Steven Regal should respect his wrestling ability, says reader Larry W. Green Jr. He claims Regal's opponents are usually the ones who first break the rules.

agree 100 percent with you. But it's really foolish on your part to let an editor of your magazine insult a country the USA has been very close with for nearly 50 years.

I believe all German wrestling fans deserve an apology.

SASCHA RICHTER
Wuppertal, Germany

ROYALLY REGAL

After a seemingly endless "waiting period," it's time for the wrestling world to give long overdue credit to one Lord Steven Regal. In spite of stiff challenges from such stars as Rick Steamboat, Brad Armstrong, Davey Boy Smith, Terry Taylor, and Arn Anderson, Lord Steven has retained the WCW TV title and used

it to flaunt his considerable wrestling skills.

Regal is an incredibly gifted wrestler whose matches should be required viewing for all aspiring wrestlers. Astute observation of his matches reveal an interesting fact—his opponents are usually the first to break the rules. Regal should be a major force in WCW for some time to come.

LARRY W. GREEN JR.
Macon, GA

DUSTY OBSERVATIONS

In David Rosenbaum's "Behind The Dressing Room Door" in the March 1994 issue, he said that The Assassin and Dusty Rhodes "both are in the worst shape of their lives." You justified this by



Dusty Rhodes is still in good shape, according to Angelina Wilson. She didn't appreciate a comment from David Rosenbaum that Rhodes hadn't exercised in over a year.

printing a quote from a WCW source—"Dusty hasn't done an ounce of exercise in over a year."

Baloney! Dusty said on national TV that he still works out every day. Is WCW calling Dusty a liar? I, a longtime fan of the Rhodes family, do not appreciate it one bit. Mr. Rosenbaum sounded like Eddie Ellner with his uncalled-for remarks about Dusty's eating habits.

ANGELINA WILSON
Manchaug, MA

INDY ELITE

What use are titles if their champions aren't even ranked in the Top 15? By no means am I expecting every champion to be ranked in the Top 15, but there are certain men who I believe should be considered.

I have noticed several champions of independent promotions neglected from INSIDE WRESTLING's elite list. I base my opinion on that

(Continued on page 74)

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

On the way home from a wrestling card, I review the matches in my mind, trying to recall the best individual efforts, the biggest upsets, the best of the card, the worst of the card. It passes the time and gives me the opportunity to put matters in perspective.

WrestleMania, being the biggest card of the year, naturally gives me a lot to think about. There was the remarkable courage of Razor Ramon and Shawn Michaels, the selfishness of special referee Curt Hennig, the ruthlessness of Owen Hart, the fortitude of Bret Hart. I am ashamed to say what kept coming to mind as I made the two-hour trek back to Pennsylvania from Madison Square Garden on March 20.

With one bout still remaining on the card, I was shocked to see people—a lot of people—getting out of their seats and heading for the aisles. They were going home before the end!

The last match, folks, just happened to be the WWF World title match between Bret Hart and Yokozuna. I couldn't believe it then, couldn't figure it out in my car, and I still can't believe it now. If these people didn't care about the main event, what the heck did they pay between \$25 and \$300 to see? Admittedly, the match didn't turn out to be the greatest, but there is no denying its significance.

I've been to many sporting events in my life. I've seen people leave in the seventh inning of one-sided ballgames during the regular season, but I've never seen anybody leave a World Series game, the Super Bowl, or a big-time fight before the main event. Those people who left WrestleMania X before the end are not wrestling fans. They did not deserve to be in Madison Square Garden on wrestling's biggest day.

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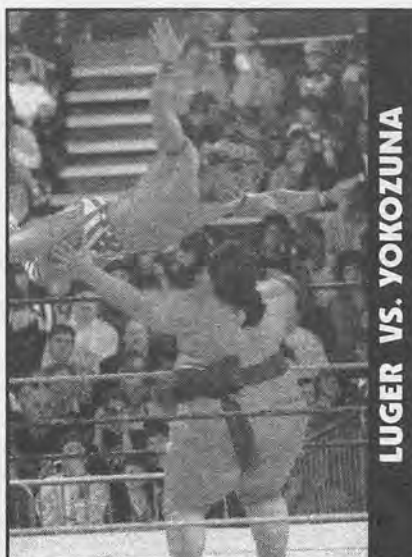
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NAMES IN

BRET HART'S SLOGAN is, "The best there was, the best there is, and the best there ever will be." And he validated that statement at *WrestleMania X* by defeating **Yokozuna** at 10 minutes 31 seconds for his second WWF World title, avenging a title loss to the sumo star at *WrestleMania IX* the previous April.

But his slogan doesn't include anything about being the best in his family. At *WrestleMania X*, those bragging rights belonged to younger brother **Owen Hart**, who pummeled Bret early in the card and won the match at 20:21, reversing an attempted victory roll.

But that wasn't the only bizarre thing that happened before a sell-out crowd at Madison Square Garden in New York. For the second time, **Lex Luger** dominated **Yokozuna** in a title match, only to come away with nothing. At last year's *SummerSlam*, Luger won by countout but committed a fatal flaw by not bringing **Yokozuna**



LUGER VS. YOKOZUNA

back into the ring for a clean pin. This time, Luger lost by disqualification at 14:40 when he got too physical with guest referee **Curt Hennig**.

"Ol' Lex just isn't very bright, is he?" crowed **Jim Cornette**, Yokozuna's adviser, immediately after the match. "He's got a million-dollar physique, but a dime-store brain." Luger had flipped Cornette over the ropes before shoving Hennig.

Cornette was nowhere as ebullient after Yokozuna lost to Hart. "It was a fluke—you know it and I know it," he said. "Hart's an excellent wrestler, but he shouldn't have been able to roll out of the way of a banzai drop off the second rope. It was a one-in-a-million possibility."

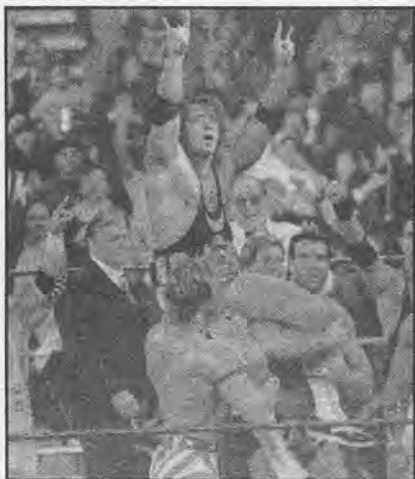
But Hart did just that, and then covered the champion for the pin, called by guest referee **Roddy Piper**.

"We're celebrating, but it's somewhat muted," family patriarch

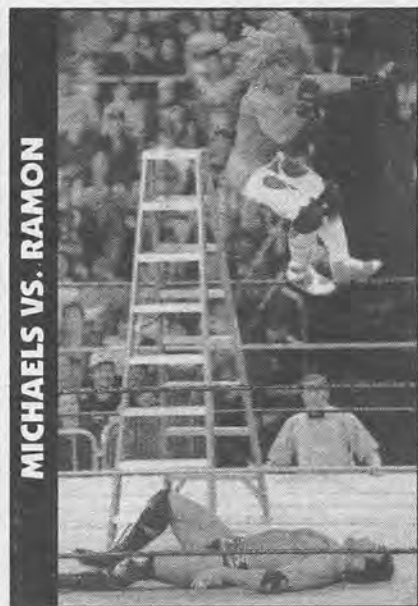
Stu Hart said. "Both Bret and Owen achieved a lot tonight, but I wonder if it was worth the cost. Bret reaffirmed his greatness, and I'm sure Owen opened many people's eyes with his effort, but I simply don't like them fighting each other."

Several WWF stars entered the ring to celebrate Bret's victory, but Owen, who had intentionally injured his brother's left leg in their battle, wasn't one of them. He approached the ring menacingly, but was escorted away by federation President **Jack Tunney**.

While the three matches above were exciting to watch, the most fascinating bout on the card was



BRET HART

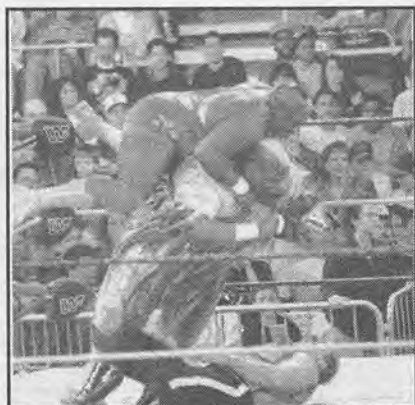


MICHAELS VS. RAMON

for the Intercontinental belt, as **Razor Ramon** retained his title by defeating former champ **Shawn Michaels** in a ladder match. Both Ramon's belt and Michaels' disputed belt were hung above the ring, and the winner had to climb

KLIN' NEWS

By Bill Apter



M.O.M. VS. QUEBECERS

the ladder and pull down both belts. The ladder was used as both a weapon and a springboard for offensive attacks. After 18:45 of incredible action, Michaels became entangled in the ropes, leaving Ramon free to retrieve the belts.

Two other titles were on the line at WrestleMania X, and the champions retained their belts. Tag team champions **The Quebecers** lost to **Men on a Mission** by countout at 7:43, keeping nefarious manager **Johnny Polo** happy. And **Alundra Blayze** kept her World Women's title by pinning veteran **Leilani Kai** at 3:24. Here's a trivia note: Kai was the only wrestler on the card who competed in the first WrestleMania in 1985, also at the Garden. That day, she lost her WWF World Women's title to **Wendi Richter**.

Blayze wasn't the only winning woman on the card. **Luna Vachon** and main squeeze **Bam Bam Bigelow**, so often humiliated by **Doink the Clown** and midget **Dink**, gained revenge with a victo-

ry at 6:09 when Bigelow pinned Doink. Under the rules, the massive Bigelow was not allowed to wrestle Dink one on one.

Randy Savage has wrestled in the Garden many times, and his knowledge of the building may have helped him beat **Crush** at 9:42 in a wild falls-count-anywhere match. The wrestlers traded falls before action spilled not only outside the ring, but out of the main arena into a room under the entrance tunnel. "Macho Man" tied up Crush, and the Hawaiian couldn't return to the ring in the required 60 seconds.

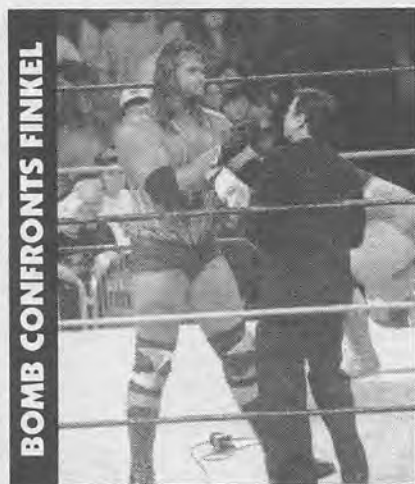
The shortest match lasted all of 32 seconds, as **Earthquake** pinned **Adam Bomb**. The **Harvey Wippleman** curse strikes again!

There was one other bout, but you only saw it if you were at the Garden. **The Heavenly Bodies** of Smoky Mountain fame defeated **The Bushwhackers**.

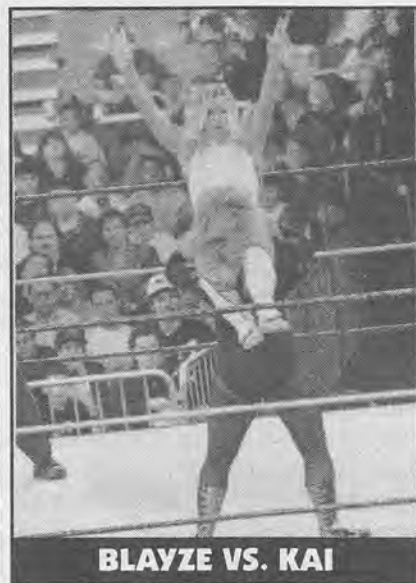
Jerry Lawler was back in the

WWF, as the Memphis monarch teamed with **Vince McMahon** to provide his unique brand of analysis on the telecast. We eagerly await seeing Lawler actually wrestle again on federation cards.

It was a fun time, thanks in part to celebrities like **Burt Reynolds** of *Evening Shade*, **Rhonda Shear** of *USA Up All Night*, and **Jennie Garth** from *Beverly Hills 90210*. (Yes, hair replacement impresario



BOMB CONFRONTS FINKEL



BLAYZE VS. KAI

Sy Sperling was there, too. There is no truth to the rumor that he tried to make me join ring announcer **Howard Finkel** as a client.) **Little Richard** delivered a wonderfully soulful version of "America The Beautiful" to open the ceremonies.

And I can't forget the Fan Festival held in conjunction with WrestleMania X. The place was packed, as fans met wrestlers, took part in fun activities, and even dunked Doink in a water tank. Let's hope this becomes an annual event.

That's all for now. See you at the matches! □

ALTHOUGH TONYA HARDING has been accused of many things, being stupid was not one of them. Until now.

What you are about to read is true. Takashi Matsunaga, the head of the All-Japan Women's Pro Wrestling federation, has offered Harding 100 million yen to become a wrestler in his promotion, competing with and against such stars as Manami Toyota, Bull Nakano, and Eagle Sawai.

This is not some joke making the rounds in the office, like the one that had Harding endorsing the auto theft-prevention device known as The Club. Matsunaga, a businessman with an eye for athletic talent, said the embattled figure skater "was made to be a pro wrestler."

Matsunaga said Harding would be trained for six

ON THE ROAD

With Chris Bernucca

mals. Riding shotgun with Mickey Mouse—now there's inspiring work.

In this age of electronic media, Matsunaga could have had the press informally deliver the proposal to Harding. Instead, he dispatched a representative of his promotion to Oregon to formally make the offer. However, satellite transmission is still much faster than airplane transportation. Harding, still followed by a media throng wherever she goes, was posed the question by a reporter.

"Give me a break," was the figure skater's immediate response.

Psst. Hey, Tonya. Come here. I want to tell you something, you jerk.

This is a break.

This is perhaps the biggest break Harding could



Tonya Harding (above left) won't be skating competitively again, but her athletic career needn't end. She's been offered a contract to wrestle in Japan against the likes of Eagle Sawai (above right).



months before actually stepping into the ring under competitive conditions. For those of you without a monetary conversion table, 100 million yen is equivalent to \$2-million. Matsunaga arrived at that sum based on what the Walt Disney Company has paid rival skater Nancy Kerrigan to cavort with stuffed ani-

possibly receive. The circumstances surrounding the events at the U.S. figure skating championships, in which four men with ties to Harding, including her ex-husband, have been charged in the attack on Kerrigan, have made Harding *persona non grata* in

(Continued on page 76)

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Hulk Hogan hails from which California beach community?

- 1) Malibu
- 2) Pacific Heights
- 3) Venice Beach
- 4) Newport Beach

At what University did Ron Simmons play football?

- 1) Notre Dame
- 2) Florida State University
- 3) Michigan State University
- 4) Oglethorpe University

True or False: Giant Gonzales competed in the 1984 Olympics as a member of Argentina's water polo team

- 1) True
- 2) False

The Undertaker was once tag team partners with...

- 1) Lou Albano
- 2) Sergeant Slaughter
- 3) Rick Steiner
- 4) None of the above

How did you do? If you're up for the challenge and want to put your wrestling knowledge to work, call now and go for the \$250!

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Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

SO MISSY HYATT is now plying her wares for the new World Wrestling Network. In the grand old tradition of used car dealers using bikini-clad women to help sell their cars, the WWN has turned to an old reliable: young, beautiful women.

The Grand Ol' Hyatt has never been embarrassed about showing off her shapely figure, nor has she ever been a particularly good judge of character. There's something wrong with a woman who bounced from John Tatum to Eddie Gilbert to the Steiners to The Nasty Boys. One out of four ain't good.

Missy's done a little better in her personal life, where her beau selection has included Jason Hervey, formerly of *The Wonder Years*, and Philadelphia Flyer hot-ticket Rod Brind'Amour.

But this time Missy's asking for big-time trouble. You know, despite all of Missy's shortcomings, she has usually managed to keep away from other women's men. Tatum was a free man and so was Gilbert. The Nasty Boys will always be free men.

This time, however, Missy is stepping on Sherri Martel's prop-



For nearly a decade, Missy Hyatt has exploited her beauty into managerial associations. "Hollywood" John Tatum introduced her to wrestling, for better or worse, in 1985.

erty, and that could mean trouble. Hyatt is officially listed as Shane Douglas' "head cheerleader" in WWN, and Mr. Douglas just happens to be managed in ECW by Sensational Sherri. With WWN (New York) and ECW (Philadelphia) promoting within 90 miles of each other, wrestling could be in for its first Turnpike War of the Hussies. And, adding to the intrigue, Martel is currently managing The Convict, but not Douglas, in the WWN.

Publicly, Missy and Sherri are being good girls about the situation. Sherri said she doesn't care what Missy does as long as she keeps away from her turf. Missy said just about the same thing, although she said it in that high-pitched whiny voice that is known by many men as the short end of a Faustian bargain: the voice for the body.

"I don't care what Sherri does with Shane anywhere else," Missy

(Continued on page 78)

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the Insider

by Eddie Ellner

During the 1980s, wrestling was riding a wave of popularity, supposedly thanks to Dusty Rhodes (under attack by Stan Hansen) and other fan favorites. But things were bound to swing in the rule-breakers' direction.

(The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Eddie Ellner alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.)

TEN YEARS AGO, when I started writing for *INSIDE WRESTLING*, Hulk Hogan was a recently crowned champion and we were helpless to watch as he drove us, kicking and screaming, into a twilight zone with ring ropes. It happened, like it or not, and to deny it or otherwise dismiss Hogan's impact on the sport is the posture of a lunatic.

I took my cues from veteran journalists like Dan Shocket, who acknowledged the inevitability of change by exposing the flaws the changes produced. Hogan was an easy target. Nothing better embodied the excess, attitude, and arrogance of the '80s than Hulk-ania. It was a time when size triumphed: Might made right, bigger was preferred—regardless of how the size was achieved.

We held our breath and waited for the Hogan train to derail, and we took special delight when it did. The waiting was the hardest part. During Hogan's decade-long coronation, I lobbied hard for the alternative viewpoint. A column here and there defending the "villains" of the sport labeled me forever as a "rulebreaking" columnist.

Despite receiving significant positive response from readers,



proving clearly there was an audience for the other side—the side of the disenfranchised, the forlorn, the ugly (the rulebreakers), the publishers refused to accommodate it. "You have your columns," they said. "Be satisfied you have that."

In retrospect, you couldn't blame them. Think back just seven years. Rick Morton, Robert Gibson, Dusty Rhodes, the Von

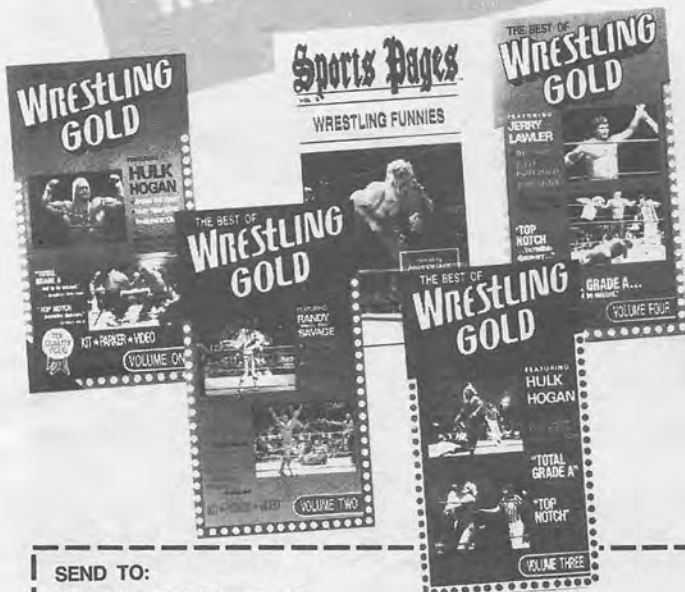
Erichs, wrestlers of small talents and giant egos ruled the roost. Wrestling was more popular than ever and magazine sales went through the roof. Why mess with a successful formula?

I could see the coming backlash as clear as day. My suggestion that there were enough readers to make an entire magazine

(Continued on page 80)

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ON Assignment

By Liz Hunter

I CALLED EDDIE Gilbert's mother—I'll call her Mrs. Gilbert to protect her privacy—after she lent Eddie her van to offer as a prize in his upcoming match against Jerry Lawler.

"Aren't you worried something may happen to it?" I asked. The van was very precious to her. She had it custom detailed and waxed it every week. "What if Eddie loses?"

"They're my children," she replied indignantly, as if the question was outrageously out of line. "I'd do anything for my boys."

I called Mrs. Gilbert after Eddie lost the match and the van. Rather than let Lawler take possession, he destroyed it with a fire extinguisher. I wondered how she felt about her decision.

"I love Eddie," she sighed. "Children can't be perfect. Besides, it's just a machine, a thing. Better lose it than one of my boys."

The life of a wrestling parent isn't easy. While the moms of other famous athletes are reposed in mansions their rich offspring bought them with their fat signing bonuses, wrestling mothers grow old before their time.

"It's like living with a son in a war zone," Mrs. Gilbert says of having two boys, Eddie and Doug, in the trenches every night. "No matter how good my day is going, if one of them are wrestling that night I'm a nervous wreck."

Particularly when the son in question is Eddie Gilbert.

"My mom's a saint," Gilbert said after the Lawler fiasco. "I'll get her a new van tomorrow." But tomorrow came and went. A week passed, and then two, and Mrs.

Gilbert was still hitching rides with neighbors when she had to go shopping.

"It's been a blessing," she says. "It gives me a chance to talk with my friends. You get so busy with things you don't appreciate a

What about younger brother Doug? Isn't he a little disgusted by the shameless way his brother dragged Mom into the mess of his professional life?

Replied Doug, apparently having forgotten his feud with Eddie:



Photo by Scott George

Eddie Gilbert's mother doesn't get around much anymore. That's because her son threw a fire extinguisher through the windshield of her van after he lost it to Jerry Lawler in a USWA match.

good chat with your neighbor. I've also become acquainted with the Memphis mass transit system. The bus service is excellent."

But why hasn't Eddie replaced the van? Surely he has the money. He makes a good living. Doesn't he care about his poor mother?

"Eddie has a lot on his mind lately," Mrs. Gilbert says. "He'll get to it. Lord knows there are more important things in the world."

"Families stick together in times of crisis." But who's looking out for dear ol' Mom?

"She's fine," said—surprise, surprise—Tommy Gilbert, the clan's patriarch. Hey, Pop, aren't you a bit miffed by the latest turn of events?

"My children are old enough to take care of themselves and my wife certainly is," he says. "What she does with them is her own

(Continued on page 82)

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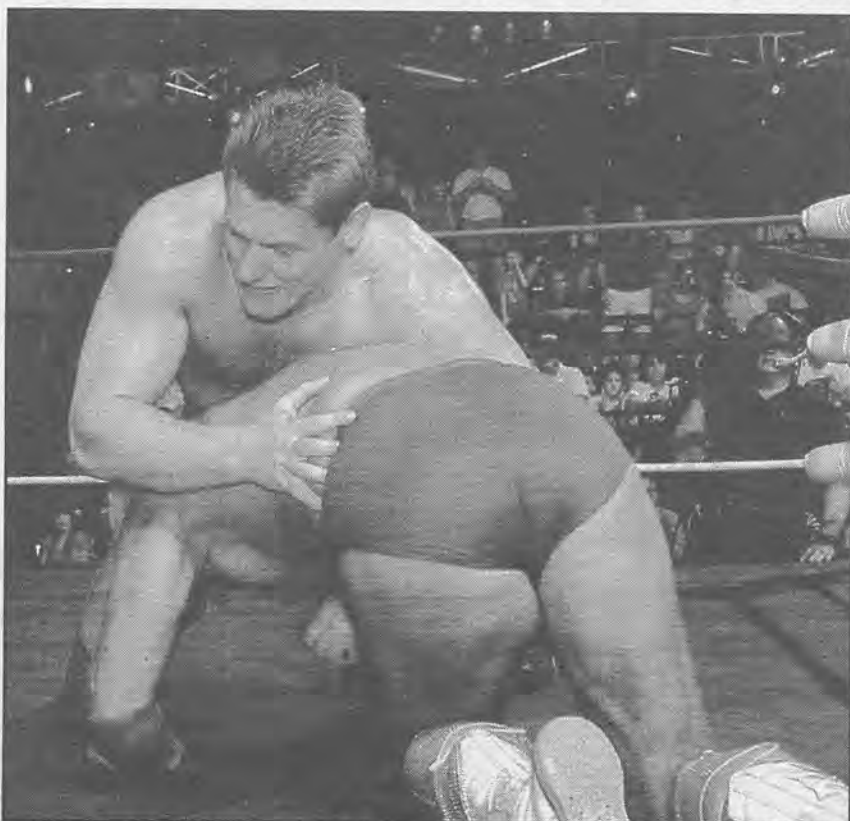
INSIDE WRESTLING CAPSULE PROFILE ²¹⁶

LORD STEVEN REGAL

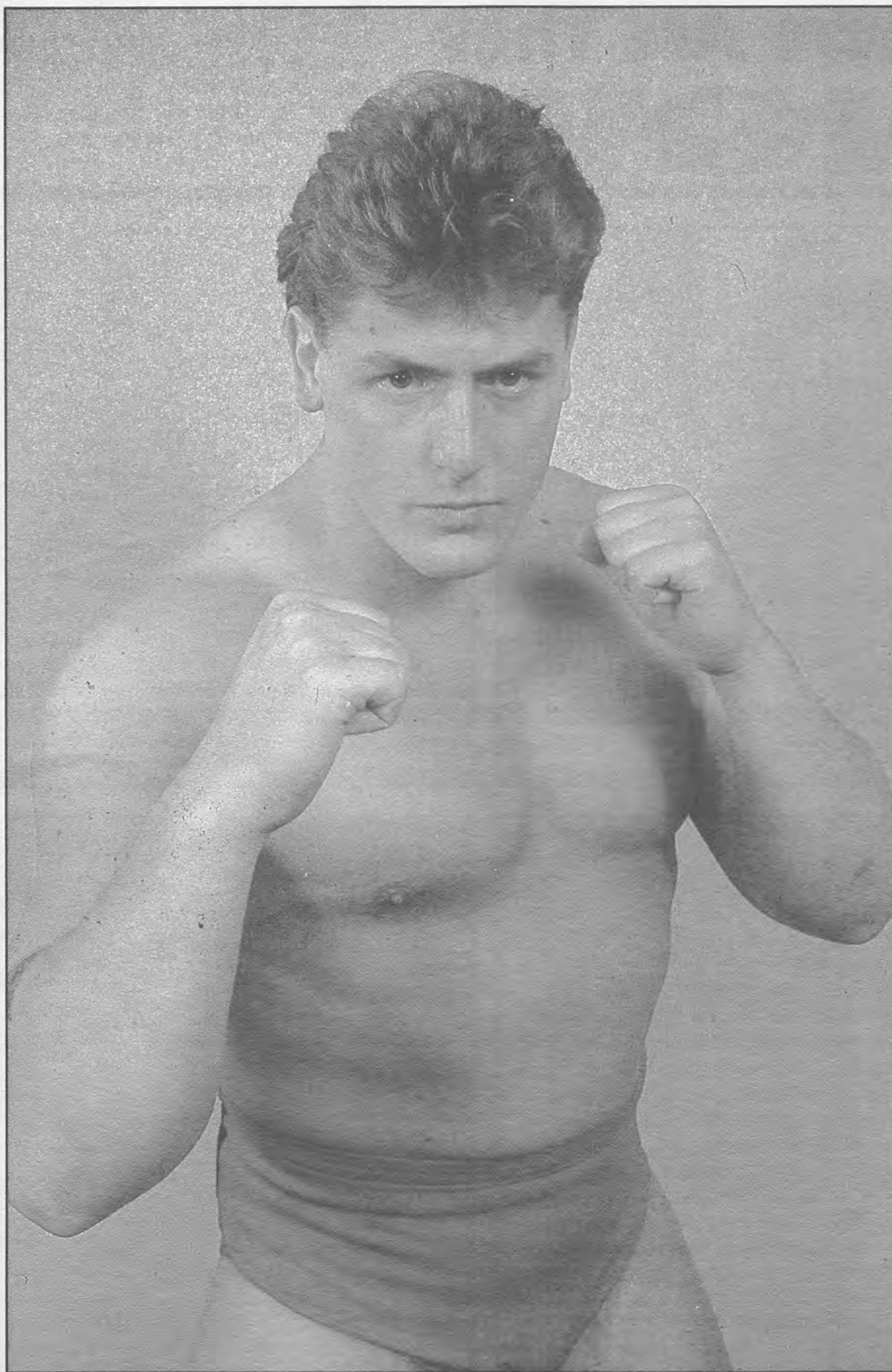
HE CLAIMS TO be a direct descendant of William the Conqueror, though most people question Lord Steven Regal's claims. Few will dispute, however, that the 6'4", 247-pound Blackpool, England, native is fast becoming one of the finest technical wrestlers in the world. He's held the WCW TV title for more than six months ... Though he's only been in America for a year, has 10 years of international experience under his belt (*"I was by far the best athlete in Europe. Now these common Amer-*

icans must learn I am the best here as well") ... Has wrestled in 19 different countries (*"All presented different challenges, but, of course, there is no wrestler in the land as good as me")* ... At age 15, challenged wrestler Col. Brody at a carnival in Blackpool. He was beaten so badly that he had to be carried from the ring on a stretcher and taken to a hospital (*"What a brute that Brody was ... a commoner with no class")* ... Wrestled his first official pro match in 1984, losing to Tiger Tompkins (*"A stroke of luck for the man. I can barely recall it")* ... Steadily improved his skills during the next few years ... Held several European titles in the late-1980s,

including the European heavyweight championship, the European tag team title with Miles Zrno, and the British heavyweight and tag team title (*"There will be many more to come, particularly if I keep competing against these overrated North Americans")* ... Introduced to American wrestling when WCW toured the U.K. in 1991. Competed against The Freebirds, Terry Taylor, and Vinnie Vegas (*"A few interesting challengers ... but none of my caliber")* ... Finally signed with WCW last spring ... Initially competed as a fan favorite, but soon became an arrogant rulebreaker and hired manager Sir William (*"I finally discovered a manager with as much class as I have")* ... Defeated Erik Watts at Beach Blast '93, proving he was a force to be reckoned with ... Won the TV title from Rick Steamboat at Fall Brawl in September shortly after he attacked and badly injured Steamboat's ribs at a TV taping (*"Mr. Steamboat is a good athlete, but not a man worthy of holding the TV championship like I am")* ... Briefly feuded with fellow British native Davey Boy Smith (*"The mere mention of that fish-and-chips-eating commoner gets me ill")* ... Has successfully defended the TV belt against Steamboat, Arn Anderson, Johnny B. Badd, and others, often with Sir William's help ... Frequently refuses to put title on the line after a match's first 15 minutes (*"Those who want my title must do it on my terms")* ... Recently wrestled a series of five-minute "Marquis De Queensbury" rules matches against WCW World champion Ric Flair (*"That chap is getting older, I am merely getting better")*. □



Even those who despise Lord Steven Regal's bombastic personality concede he is among the finest technical wrestlers around. He recently split a series "Marquis De Queensbury" rules matches with WCW World champion Ric Flair.



LORD STEVEN REGAL

Where Are They NOW

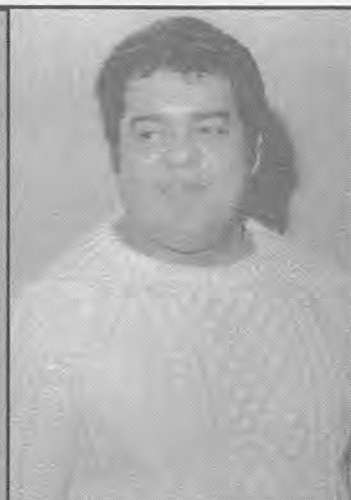
Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



DUTCH MANTEL

The "Dutchman" has left the USWA and is now competing in Puerto Rico's WWC. "We got a whole lot of trouble down here that I'm gonna get myself involved in and clean up," Dutch said. "WWC has never seen a man as talented

and crazy as the Dutchman. Invader, Greg Valentine, all the rest of you, I have no friends around here, just opponents, and I'll go down in history as World Wrestling Council's greatest 'rassler!'"



PEDRO MORALES

Until recently, the former great WWF champion worked on the federation's Spanish-language broadcasts. Pedro left his post and decided to go back into training for a possible comeback. "I'm not old and I see a lot of

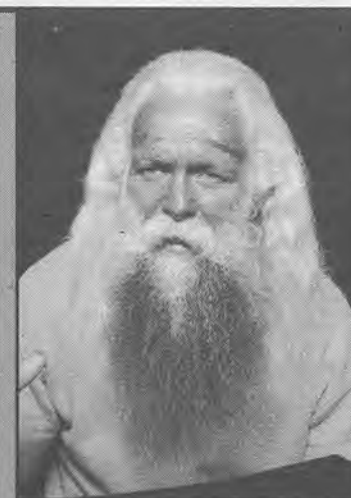
guys around today who say they could have beaten me when I was champion. There is a possibility they may get that chance soon, baby, 'cause I am ready for any kin' o' action! I may put the trunks back on—soon!"



LANCE RUSSELL

The longtime announcer is now retired from broadcasting, but he recently hosted a ceremony before the USWA's "Memphis Memories" card that honored some of the region's wrestling greats. Russell—who's lived in the

same Memphis home for the past 45 years—occasionally appears on USWA telecasts. He is also involved in other projects, including a wrestling telephone hotline. "It's also real nice to be able to spend a little more time with my family," he added.



JIMMY VALIANT

The popular "Boogie Woogie Man" has been wrestling in Memphis and several Carolina independent federations lately. However, most of his time is spent at his own wrestling school in Shawsville, Virginia.

"Wooh! Boogie Woogie gonna make some champions outta my students! The maker of champions—that's what I am, baby!" Valiant, a vegetarian, also has a goat farm on the school site. "That goat milk keeps Boogie Woogie real healthy," he said.

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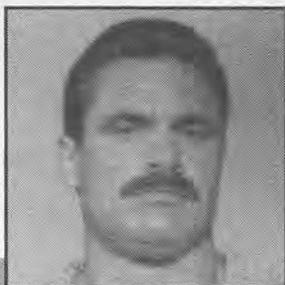
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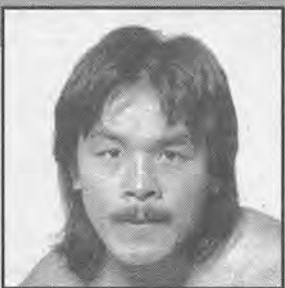
CONSUMER DISCLOSURE: No purchase/phone call required. To enter by mail, print/affix your name address, phone number and birthdate (no staples) on a standard USPS 19c postcard and mail to CCL Sweepstakes, 1650 Limekiln Pk., #400, Dresher, PA 19025. Open to US residents 13 yrs. and older. CA residents must be 18. Improper, incomplete and illegible entries are disqualified. Sweepstakes void in AR, GA, LA, MN, NJ, OR, VT and where prohibited by law. Odds of winning the grand prize depend on number of eligible entries received. One winner chosen by random drawing. Prize is 2 tickets to a concert in any city in the continental US of winner's choice, subject to availability, accommodations at a luxury hotel for 2 for one night's stay, roundtrip coach airfare for 2 to city where concert is being held, limousine transportation to and from airport and to and from concert, plus \$1,000 cash. Approx. retail value of prize package: \$2,500. One winner will be selected at random by Pine, Feinstein & Associates, Inc., an independent organization whose decisions are final. Sweepstakes starts 2/1/94 and ends 9/30/94. Phone calls must be received by 11:59pm, 9/30/94. Mail entries must be postmarked by 9/30/94 and received by 10/7/94. Callers to the 800 number will be provided with a calling card account #. Instructed to redial the 800 number and input their account # to enter sweepstakes. Touchtone phone required. Rotary callers will be referred to a 900 number at a cost of \$2.99/min. Avg. call 3 min/\$8.97. Caller bonus void in CA. Sweepstakes subject to Complete Official Rules. To get a copy of Complete Official Rules and/or name of winner, send a self-addressed stamped envelope indicating specific request to CCL Sweepstakes Rules, 1650 Limekiln Pk., #400, Dresher, PA 19025 (WA, CA, & VT residents need not affix postage). This promotion sponsored by Concert Connection, Ltd., 1650 Limekiln Pk., #400, Dresher, PA 19025, 215-641-0676.

NEWS FROM THE WR

TOKYO, JAPAN BY KOICHI YOSHIZAWA



RICK RUDE VS. HIROSHI HASE



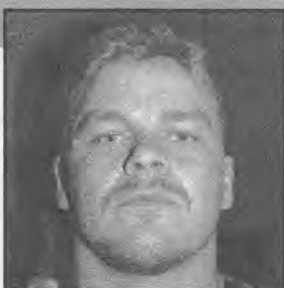
Hase pulled a shocker on this New Japan card by winning WCW's International title (a title not recognized by *INSIDE WRESTLING* or its related magazines) from Rude before a full house of 9,200 fans. In this no-disqualification match, Hase posted the pin at 16:52, using a light suplex hold. Rude had held this title since last September, when he defeated Ric Flair in Houston.

OTHER BOUTS: Nobukazu Hirai beat Tokimitsu Ishizawa ... Manabu Nakanishi beat Yuji Nagata ... Michitoshi Ohara & The Great Kabuki beat Akira Nogami & Takayuki Iizuka when Ohara pinned Iizuka ... El Samurai & Jushin Liger beat Black Tiger & Killer Bee when Liger pinned Bee ... Scott Norton pinned Power Warrior ... Shinya Hashimoto beat The Barbarian ... Osamu Kido & Masa Chono beat Antonio Inoki & Tadao Yasuda by disqualification ... Yoshiaki Fujiwara, Riki Choshu, & Tatsumi Fujinami beat Tatsutoshi Goto, Shiro Koshinaka, & Kengo Kimura when Choshu pinned Goto.

PHILADELPHIA, PA BY JOE VINCENT



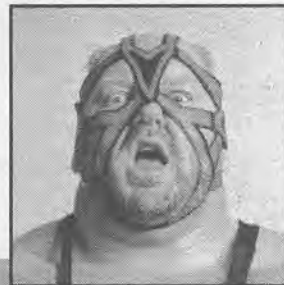
TERRY FUNK VS. SHANE DOUGLAS



ECW heavyweight champion Funk still defies time. Nearing his 50th birthday, he put away former champion Douglas, managed by Sherri Martel. It was a taped-fist match, which could end only by pinfall, submission, or knock-out. Funk is frequently executing moonsaults these days, and even hit Douglas with one. When Martel got in the act, Funk actually suplexed her in the ring. Douglas couldn't answer the 10-count, but he and Funk fought until being separated.

OTHER BOUTS: TV champion Sabu pinned Mike Awesome ... The Bruise Brothers defeated Public Enemy to earn a tag team title match ... In the title match, The Bruise Brothers beat Kevin Sullivan & Tasmaniac by disqualification ... In a handicap match, 911 defeated Paul Bullear & Mikey Whipwreck ... Pat Tanaka & J.T. Smith beat Pit Bull Psycho Mike & Rockin' Rebel ... Tommy Dreamer pinned Jimmy Snuka ... Road Warrior Hawk beat Mr. Hughes ... Sandman pinned Chad Austin.

DRESDEN, GERMANY BY COLIN BOWMAN



BIG VAN VADER VS. CACTUS JACK



German fans had heard plenty about the rivalry between these two WCW stars, and got all they expected and more when they met at the Eisssporthalle. While Vader is primarily concerned these days with avenging his World title losses to Ric Flair and getting his revenge against The Boss, he still despises Cactus, and the hatred is definitely mutual. Vader and Cactus began brawling from the opening bell, and action quickly spilled outside the ring. Once he and Cactus were back on the mat, he used his devastating power bomb to register the pin.

OTHER BOUTS: 2 Cold Scorpio & Marcus Alexander Bagwell defeated Paul Roma & Paul Orndorff ... Arn Anderson pinned Kane ... Sting & Rick Steamboat beat Steve Austin & Ron Simmons. **First round, European Cup championship:** Lord Steven Regal pinned Maxx Payne ... Ric Flair pinned Johnny B. Badd.

ESTLING CAPITALS

**MEMPHIS, TN
BY PHIL SEAWRIGHT**



**EDDIE GILBERT
VS.
JERRY LAWLER**



The hottest rivalry in Memphis continued as local hero Lawler tried to win back his USWA title from champion Gilbert in a "coward-waves-the-flag" match. "The King" used several piledrivers to endanger Gilbert, but Eddie's second, brother Doug Gilbert, had no interest in surrendering. Then an unidentified man from the dressing room attacked Lawler's second, Brian Christopher, who retaliated—but accidentally waved his flag. Referee Frank Morell immediately ruled Gilbert the winner.

OTHER BOUTS: Tony Williams beat Ken Wayne ... Spellbinder beat Reggie B. Fine ... Jeff Gaylord defeated Skull Von Crush by disqualification ... Billy Travis beat Koko B. Ware by disqualification ... In a match where the loser's back was to be spray-painted, Wolfie D. defeated J.C. Ice ... Brian Christopher pinned Southern champion Doug Gilbert to win the title ... Jerry Lawler and Brian Christopher beat USWA tag team champions The Moondogs by disqualification.

**MARIETTA, GA
BY MARLA ROBBINS**



**THE KID
VS.
BOBBY BLAZE**



Smoky Mountain Wrestling's inaugural card in Georgia opened in a dynamic way, as its representative, Blaze, took on the WWF's Kid in a battle of top light heavyweights. Neither aerial expert took control for several minutes, but Kid's experience eventually began to pay off. He rolled out of a Blaze leap off the top rope, then put him away with a flying bodypress.

OTHER BOUTS: Festus defeated New Jack to win the North Georgia title ... In a non-title match, Tracey Smothers beat U.S. junior heavyweight champion Chris Candido ... Ron Garvin defeated Kevin Sullivan by disqualification ... Lex Luger beat Irwin R. Schyster ... Tony Anthony & "Dirty White Girl" Kimberly defeated Brian Lee & Tammy Fytch ... Scott, Steve, and Brian Armstrong beat Well Dunn & Owen Hart ... The Rock 'n' Roll Express defeated SMW tag team champions The Heavenly Bodies by disqualification ... In a cage match, Bob Armstrong beat Jim Cornette.

**BERLIN, GERMANY
BY LUDWIG WAGNER**



**ALUNDRA BLAYZE
VS.
LEILANI KAI**



The WWF World Women's champion—who's been popular with German fans for many years—successfully defended her title before an enthusiastic audience at Deutschland Hall. All of Blayze's varied athletic skills and wrestling smarts were needed against Kai, the former champion. Kai contended for several minutes, very nearly putting a surprised Blayze on the defensive, but the champ withstood the challenge and gradually wore down and confused Kai with her extensive repertoire. Ironically, Blayze's finishing move was a German waistlock suplex.

OTHER BOUTS: Sparky Plugg defeated Bastion Booger ... Diesel defeated Virgil ... Rick "The Model" Martel defeated Jeff Jarrett ... Earthquake defeated Adam Bomb ... Tatanka defeated Kwang the Ninja ... Intercontinental champion Razor Ramon defeated Shawn Michaels ... Randy Savage defeated Crush.



Matt Brock's **Plain Speaking**

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

Top names seem to be coming into WCW just about every week and the wrestlers already here are starting to get excited because there is this feeling that Ted Turner, the big boss, is finally putting his stamp on the federation. Turner was at ringside for a TV taping a few weeks ago and you should've heard the buzz back in the dressing rooms when he was spotted. It's kind of like George Steinbrenner being at a Yankees game, only better because in this case the wrestlers want Turner to be there. The change in WCW is obvious. Bobby Heenan was stolen from the WWF, Big Bossman made the jump, and the hot item on the rumor mill has Hulk Hogan coming in shortly. That would be the big coup, although I'm not sure what it would do for WCW's reputation as the federation that puts a premium on scientific wrestling. But the wrestlers don't seem to care. WCW is

ALBANY, GA

changing and this time it's not just words; it's actions.

Sabu is an up-and-comer who's losing matches he should win. Tonight, he lost the ECW TV title to Tasmaniac, who in turn lost it to J.T. Smith in the last match of the night. Sabu has all the skills in the world and he's undoubtedly the best high-flyer in the game, but he's still a little wet under the collar and unsure of what to do in certain situations. He goes fast when he should be going slow because he never takes the time to think about what he's doing. But that won't be the end of him. I've seen dozens of youngsters in my day who don't learn their lessons until somebody teaches them the hard way. That means losing and losing bad, sometimes even embarrassingly. The thing they can't take away is his skill, which is why a couple of scouts from the majors were in the stands at ECW Arena. One called Sabu "the next Great Muta" and the other said "he could be either Muta or mutant." No wonder this guy's a scout and not a writer.

PHILADELPHIA, PA



TED TURNER

Here in the Black Forest, the Germans' idea of wrestling is Brunnhilde and Wotan going at it in the final scene of *Die Walkure*. Hey, guys, how's that for ol' Matt showing some culture! I even spelled the names right. Heidi heidi heidi ho! Actually, these people are culture-starved for something besides a new *Ring* every eight years (no, I don't mean the boxing magazine) and you know the Germans love a good fight (as long as they're winning). All the frauleins and their men are battling over tickets because they want to see Crush,

BAYREUTH, GERMANY



TASMANIAC vs. SABU

Randy Savage, Shawn Michaels, and Razor Ramon in some pre-WrestleMania action. I'm here for the chocolate cake and a little recovery after watching the World Wrestling Network's debut in New York the other day, but only the cake is forthcoming. This big German dame who owns the beer garden down from my hotel took a liking to me, and now she wants to show me all around Bayreuth. Like this one-horse town really needs a tour guide. You have Richard Wagner's house, Richard Wagner's opera house, and Richard Wagner's grave. If you still have some free time, there's the Richard Wagner Monkey Jungle. Anyway, Freda keeps ringing me up on the room service phone and now I'm thinking about changing hotels, although where do I go? Why am I here? Craig Peters thinks Shawn Michaels might beat Razor Ramon for the Intercontinental title, but that's just not going to happen. Not here, at least. Another wasted trip to Europe. Memo to Stu Saks: Do

you have any idea what a car rental costs in the Black Forest?

There I am, minding my own business, reading the *New York Times* over some straphanger's shoulder on the New York City subway (the F train to Queens, if you have to know) when a story in the sports section just about makes me drop my coffee on a mangy beggar. Before this yuppie turned to Arts and Leisure, I managed to figure out that Takashi Matsunaga, chairman of All-Japan Women's Professional Wrestling, has offered \$2-million to figure skater Tonya Harding to get into the ring and wrestle. Matsunaga said he was sending a representative to Oregon to contact Harding. While he's at it, he might as well toss \$3-million at Nancy Kerrigan and set up the ice-wrestling match of the century. You don't need this reporter to tell you this is ridicu-

NEW YORK, NY

lous, so I won't. The only thing you need me to tell you is that for decades all I've been hearing about is how the Japanese take their wrestling so seriously and would never go for any of the sideshow stuff that goes on in the U.S. Right, and my Uncle Oscar married Aunt Nettie for her looks. Auntie's been dead for about eight years and now Uncle Oscar is living high on the hog somewhere down in the Keys. That's her money he's spending. The Japanese are a sucker for a spectacle just like anyone else, and Matsunaga is a promoter who knows how to get publicity. He even managed to get his promotion mentioned in the *Times*, which runs wrestling stories about as often as *INSIDE WRESTLING* runs ping-pong features. I'd like to know what the Japanese think about this, but I'm not flying all the way to Japan just to get man-on-the-street reaction. Besides, I wouldn't understand a word they're saying, even if they spoke English. □

**LOOK
INTO
WRESTLING'S
FUTURE:**

**YOU
WON'T
BELIEVE
WHAT
YOU
SEE!**

THE FUTURE IS only a day away. Little Orphan Annie said so in her musical. That calendar on your wall proves it every time. Just think of how tough it is to keep up with the present! Tomorrow, tomorrow is fast approaching.

We are entering a new world of high technology. Luxuries have become necessities. The impossible has become reality. The improbable is probable. The world has changed. Life has changed. Sports have changed, too.

And professional wrestling is racing into the future. There'll be new arenas, new federations, and new stars. But that's only the half of it.

Wrestling's future looks nothing like the present. We spoke with experts in several fields and were amazed by the concepts that could become reality within five years. Our findings are printed on the following pages.

For this special section, we analyzed every conceivable aspect of wrestling—from TV to arenas to stars to matches—in a scientific attempt at fortune-telling.

As the headline says, you won't believe what you see. This is one ride you can't miss.

THE FUTURE OF INDEPENDENT WRESTLING

ECW Sets A Violent Tone

WRESTLING IN THE most violent federation in North America is something to be proud of, according to Pat Tanaka.

"When I tell another wrestler I'm wrestling in ECW, it's like immediate respect," Tanaka said. "They know to watch themselves when I'm around, because I know how to handle myself."

Tanaka recently handled himself very well when he teamed with the vicious Sheik against Tasmaniac and Kevin Sullivan. Tanaka and Sheik won the match when Sheik threw a fire-

ball at Tasmaniac.

But such behavior isn't unusual in a federation where baseball bat and other unusual specialty matches are common and a "body count match" drew a near-capacity crowd to ECW Arena in Philadelphia. ECW has matches with no rules, double-dog-collar matches, and one-hour, three-way battles for the heavyweight belt.

"This is no place for the squeamish," said Douglas. "If you're gonna wrestle here, you'd better be ready to get hurt or do some hurting. Usually both."

In the past, independent federations were where up-and-comers found their steppingstone and the over-the-hill-gang cashed one last paycheck. These federations gave wrestling fans in small cities a chance to see live shows.

But ECW, an independent in a major city, is the wave of the future. It is violent and different. It refuses to bill itself as minor league. Therefore, it isn't.



Miguel Perez Jr. uses his Louisville Slugger on Headhunter Malfat.

THE FUTURE OF VINCE McMAHON

The WWF's Head Faces His Most Trying Test

IT IS 2001, and the most powerful man in professional wrestling is sitting in a minimum security, country club prison. Contact with the outside world is limited, but WWF head Vince McMahon Jr. somehow manages to maintain control of his organization.

Four years of battling with the federal government over a charge of illegal distribution of steroids and several failed appeals landed McMahon in this Connecticut prison. He is at least a year away from completing his sentence and returning to a world he hasn't seen in 30 months.

At press time, his future is uncertain. Certainly, those experienced with the way he operates are convinced that McMahon will get out of trouble. But the seriousness of these charges cannot be dismissed, and there is a very good chance McMahon will either do time or pay a substantial fine.

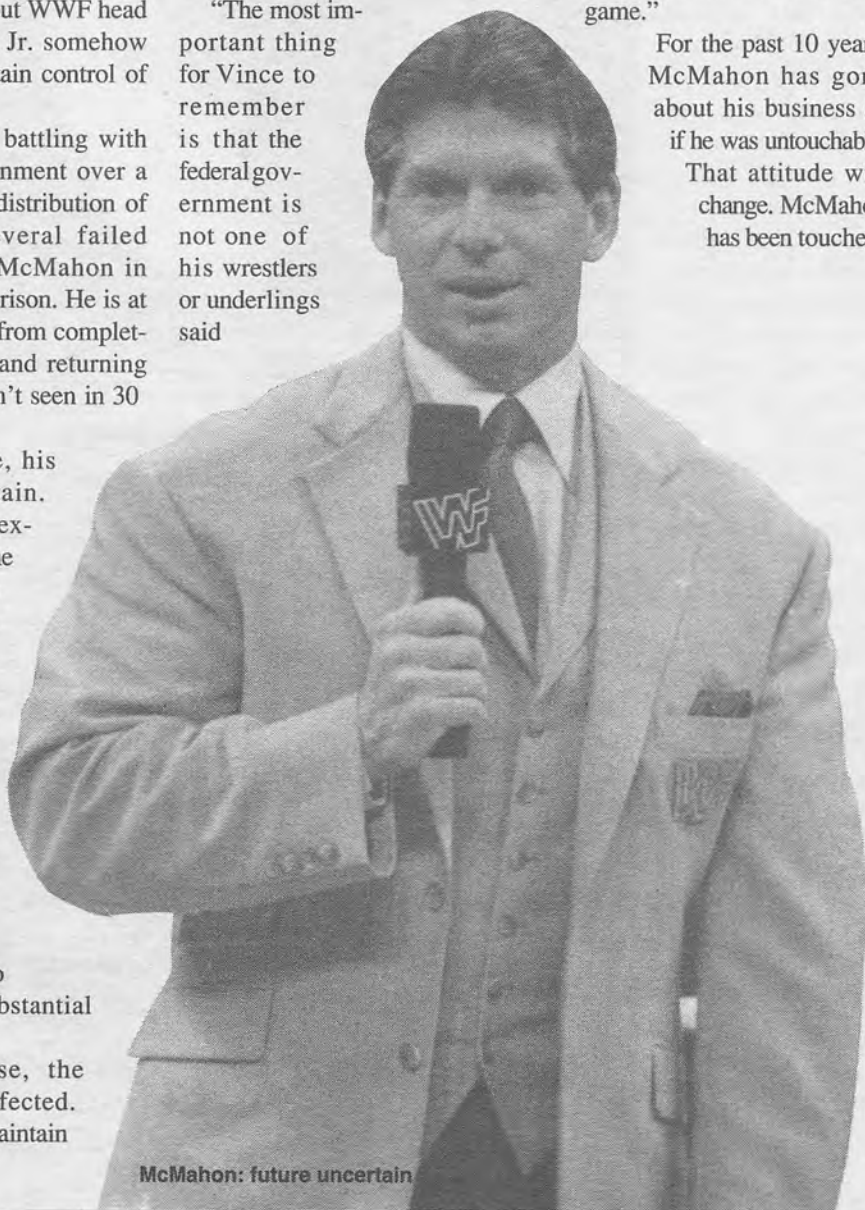
In either case, the WWF will be affected. Can McMahon maintain his power, or

will these charges—true or false—destroy his image. Can he continue selling family entertainment under these very trying circumstances?

"The most important thing for Vince to remember is that the federal government is not one of his wrestlers or underlings said

a WWF insider. "The government is after him and they're not going to let him weasel out of this. They want him, badly, and he just might have to play their game."

For the past 10 years, McMahon has gone about his business as if he was untouchable. That attitude will change. McMahon has been touched.



McMahon: future uncertain

You Won't Believe What You See

THE FUTURE OF AERIAL WRESTLING

Sabu Flies Into The Unknown

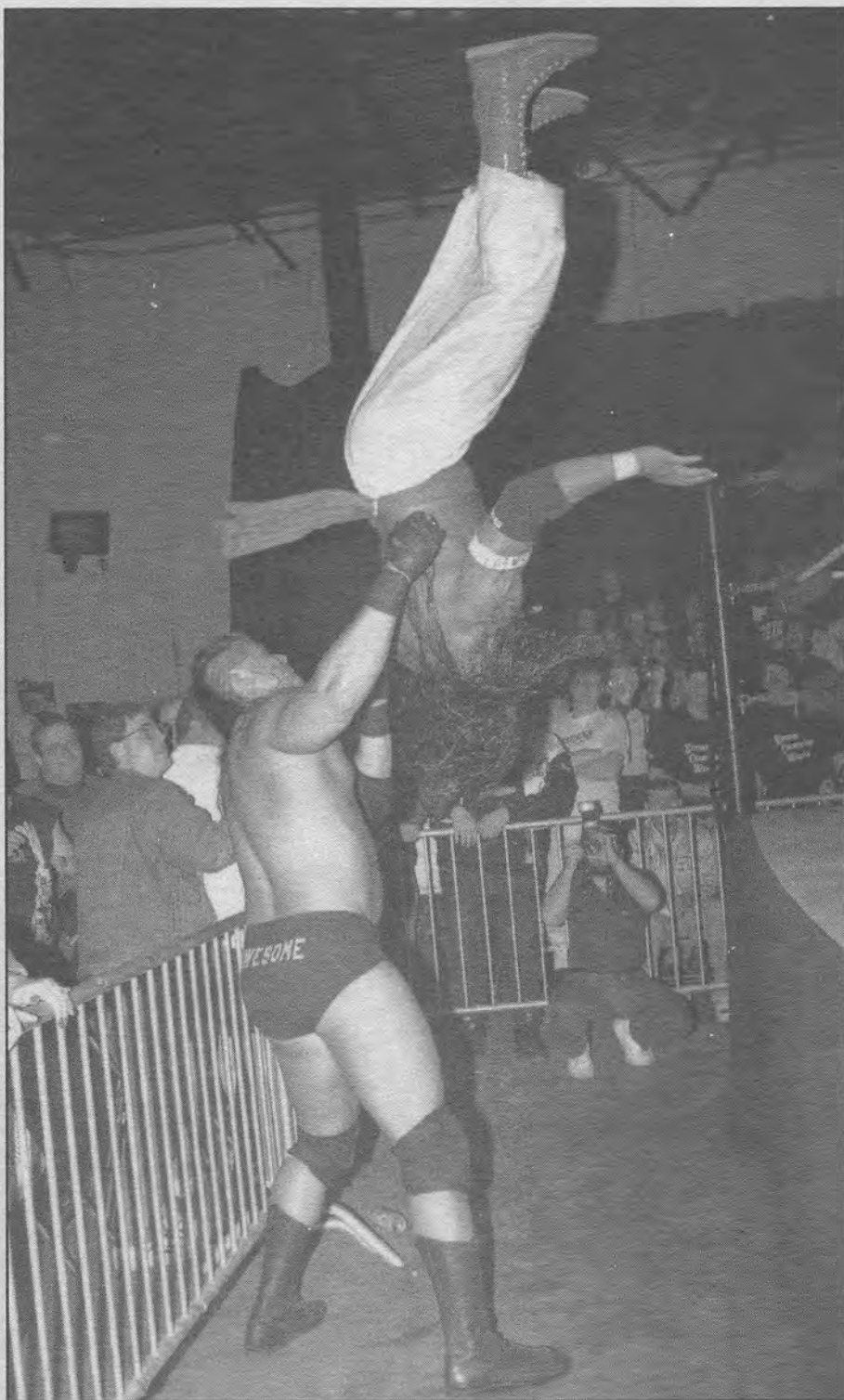
WRESTLING USED to be so simple. The world champions were the men who were best at executing the basic scientific moves, then topping them off with decisive finishers. Aerial wrestlers were the exception, and few of them were successful. Just think: Thirty years ago, the figure-four leglock was on the cutting edge.

Times have changed and aerial wrestling has changed, too. The greatest aerial wrestlers don't even need a running start to execute their high-flying maneuvers. Meanwhile, everyone is trying to outdo everyone else. And one man has succeeded. His name is Sabu.

Sabu, the young master of aerial violence, is special because he is daring. Sure, Sting regularly executes flying bodypresses outside the ring. Who else but Sabu would do a moonsault onto the timekeeper's table? No one.

Cliff-diving meets wrestling when Sabu's in the ring. He doesn't think twice about putting his body at risk. Sure, there have been spectacular crashes and misses, but Sabu leaves no room for caution. He has set the standard for the future of aerial wrestling: Dive at your own risk.

"You have to take chances," said his manager, Paul E. Dangerously. "I've seen the stuff everybody else has tried. He's taking it one better. Now everybody's playing catchup with him. Let's see if they have the guts."



Sabu moonsaults onto Mike Awesome.

THE FUTURE OF WRESTLING VIDEO GAMES

Can You Beat Vader ... For Real?

WE ARE LIVING in a society of people who take everything for granted. In the wondrous 1950s, people were amazed by every new technology. It was a wonderful age of discovery.

Now even such high-tech inventions as CD-ROM, pen-based computers, and VCRs that can be programmed over the telephone, are incorporated into everyday life without so much as a second thought. Children sit down and play video games utilizing technology that wasn't available even 10 years ago.

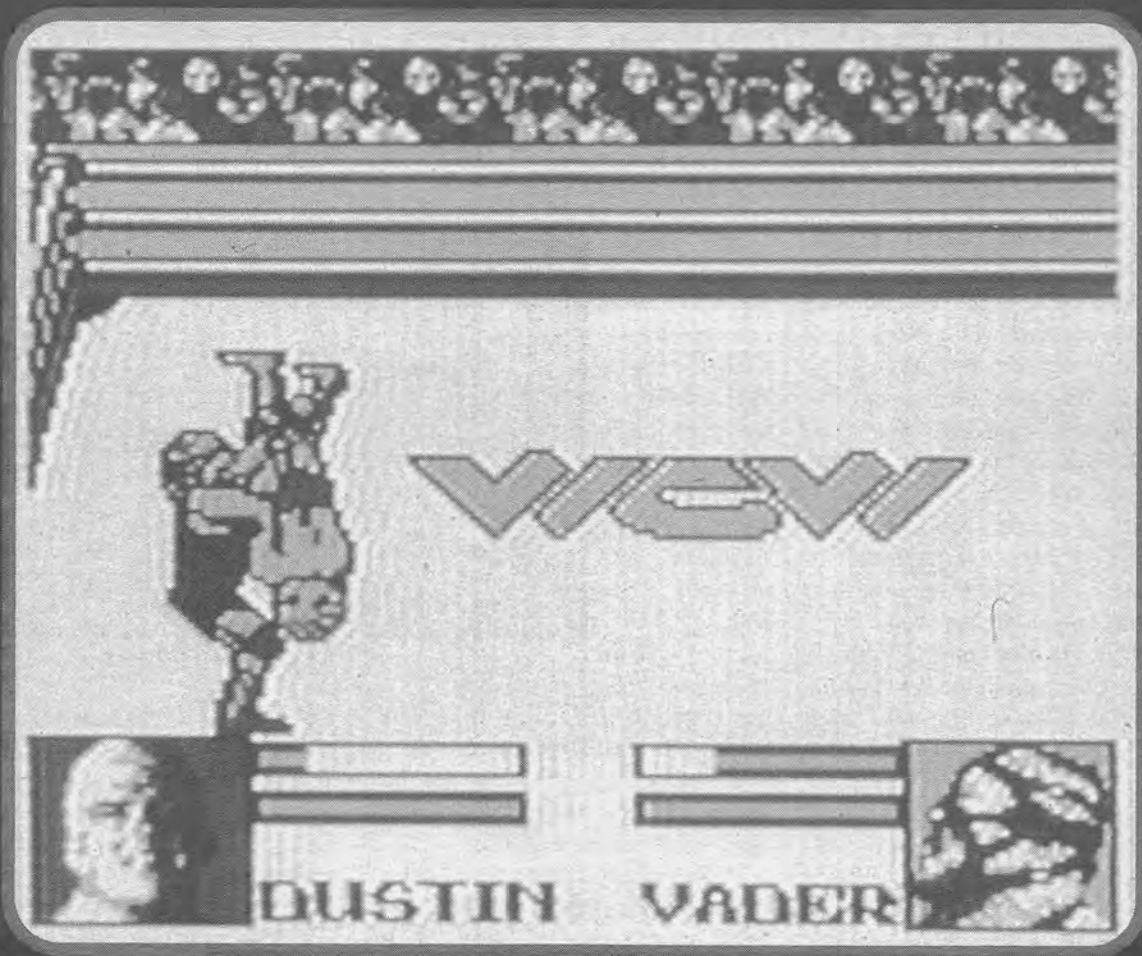
The next step is virtual reality, where instead of control-

ling a image on a screen, the game player will actually become part of the action. He'll get *inside* the action. And in this wonderful world of virtual reality video games, what could be better than virtual reality wrestling?

"The technology is already available," said Herman Steinfeld, a freelance game producer based in southern California. "It's here. We have it. Go to any major tennis tournament and virtual reality tennis is on display, where the player can go up against Jim Courier and Pete Sampras. Now it's just a matter of making the hardware available to the general public and reducing the price to an acceptable level. Right now, virtual reality is only affordable by the very rich."

What's possible? Everything. Put yourself inside of Royal Rumble, the WWF's most recent entry on the video game market. Go one-on-one with Vader ... without getting the bruises. Hit Paul E. Dangerously over the head with your own cellular telephone!

It's all there. Everything but the interviews. And that's just around the corner, too!



Does virtual reality wrestling loom on the horizon?

THE FUTURE OF TELEVISED WRESTLING

Ante Up For PPV

JUST 20 YEARS ago, the most important cards were seen only by the live audience or, in select cases, a small cable-TV viewership. Ten years ago, the most important cards could be seen on closed-circuit TV. In 1994, the only way to see a major card is either live at the arena or on pay-per-view TV for about \$24.95.

Although cynics criticize the PPV revolution, claiming it costs too much for the average fan to keep up with the sport, the truth is that never before has the average fan had the opportunity to keep up with wrestling. Now the major federations are looking for new outlets, new sources of TV revenue, and new places to go.

The WWF took a major step last year with *WWF Monday Night Raw*, its weekly, sometimes-live program on the USA Network. WCW has yet to counter *Raw*, although its taped programs from Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida, are high-tech, state-of-the-art productions.

It's unlikely we'll see more live televised wrestling. It's also unlikely we'll see more high-priced pay-per-view offerings. WCW and the WWF have saturated the market.

What's likely, according to industry sources, is more pay-per-views at a lower price.

For example, the WWF will continue serving up its annual offerings of *WrestleMania*, *Royal Rumble*, *SummerSlam*, and *Survivor Series* at an average price of \$24.95. It will supplement these supercards with monthly one-hour or 90-minute mini-supercards at \$9.95 or \$14.95. Live weekly shows might even be available at \$3.99, the popular PPV movie price.

"The market for pay-per-view has changed dramatically," said PPV expert Ashley Alexander. "The critics have been saying for years that the public won't accept pay-per-view, and they used the Olympics triplecast fiasco as an example. Well, the public is accepting PPV. The Pittsburgh Penguins hockey team put many of their games on PPV and it was a huge success. Other sports teams have had similar success. It's working. The fact of the matter is that the public has been conditioned and they'll pay for what they can't get otherwise."

Are you in that group? For some people, televised sports isn't a desire. It's a necessity.

THE FUTURE OF OFFICIATING

When Two Heads Are Better Than One

PRO BASKETBALL WENT from two officials to three. The NFL experimented with replay officials. The NHL uses instant replay on disputed goals. Only in baseball and wrestling have referees stubbornly held their ground. But the ground is coming out from under them.

Today's athletes are bigger and faster. It's almost impossible for the naked eye to keep up with their blinding speed. Instant replay and reverse-angle slow motion quickly reveals every mistake an official makes ... often to his embarrassment. The gray area has been eliminated: There's right and wrong.

Wrestling referees are missing more calls than ever. They can't keep up with everything that's going on behind their backs. The ring is small. The action is fast and violent. Quite often, referees don't make it through a match.

Fortunately, change is near. Even the elite referees admit they need help. Before long, every match in the major federations will have a referee in the ring and another at ringside. Every match will be taped so that controversial decisions can be reviewed. If this means the fall of the rulebreaker, so be it. He has survived long enough on wrestling's resistance to change.

"I definitely think there's room for improvement in the way this sport is officiated," said WCW official Nick Patrick. "We all do our best and most times we're right,



Two refs are better than one.

but what happens when we're knocked out? What happens when a manager or wrestler interferes and we don't see it? I have to admit, there are far too many tainted matches these days."

It's impossible to completely eliminate human error. But it can be reduced. That's wrestling's next step and the future isn't far away.

THE FUTURE OF WCW

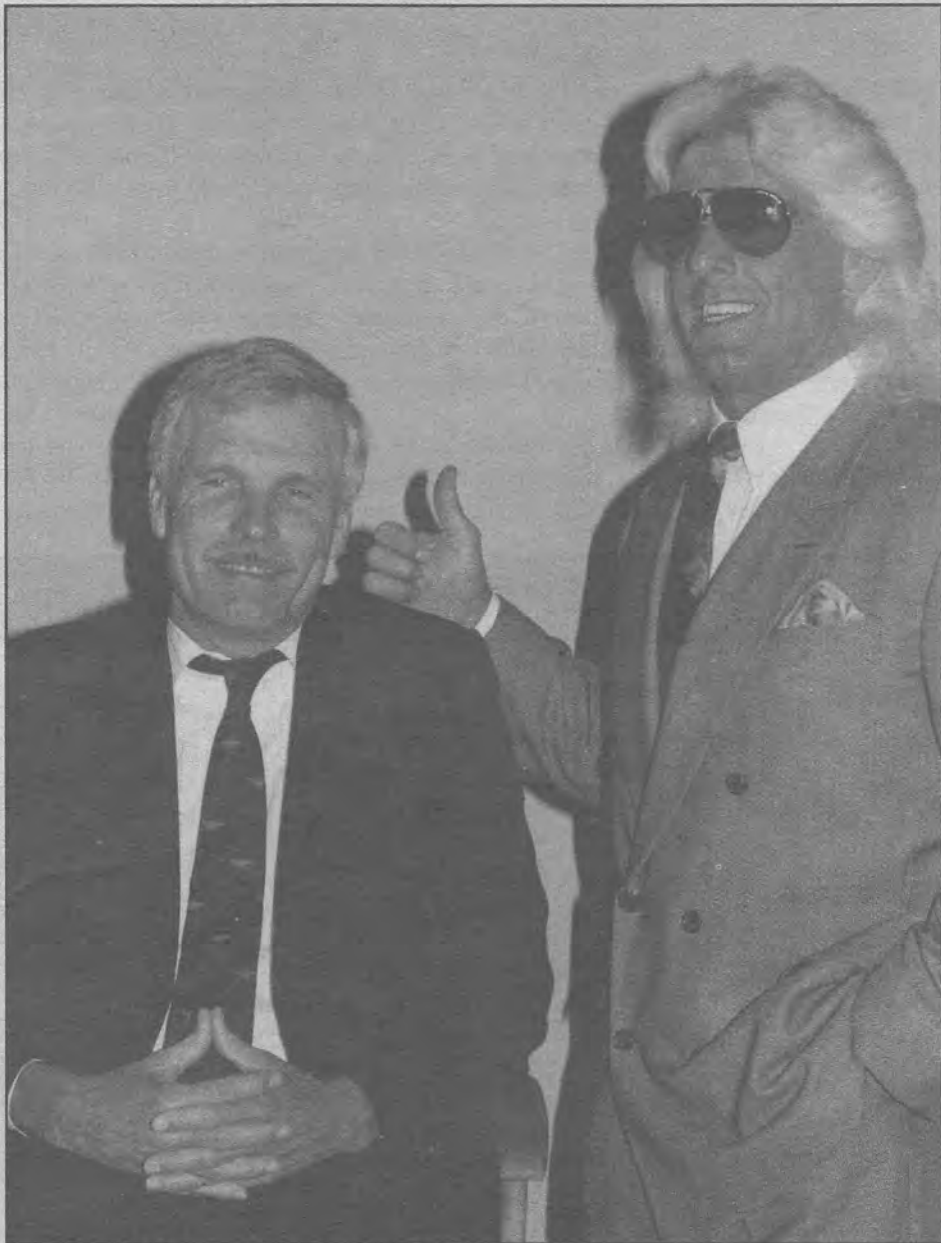
Captain America Sails To The Rescue

WHEN TED Turner purchased the Jim Crockett Promotions, the general consensus around the sport was that things were about to change and the WWF had a battle on its hands. Turner's huge financial and creative resources would help the NWA fulfill its massive potential.

Not everything has gone according to expectations. The NWA became World Championship Wrestling, production quality on TV and pay-per-views improved dramatically, and the entire federation has a more high-tech, 1990s feel. WCW has also won bidding wars with the WWF for several high-profile wrestlers and broadcasters.

But Turner's touch hasn't been felt. In fact, federation insiders complain that Turner has little direct contact with WCW. He spends his time on TNT, CNN, baseball's Braves and basketball's Hawks, and usually keeps his hands away from the sometimes grimy world of pro wrestling.

That's about to change because WCW is in dire need of change. The WWF is still the big name in pro wrestling. Turner can help WCW simply by making it a high priority on his agenda. WCW doesn't have to win more bidding wars; it wins enough. But it must improve TV production values. Most importantly, it must do something about improving its long-hurting



It's up to Ted Turner to improve WCW's image.

image. Turner has the power, especially in the cable industry.

For better or worse, Vince McMahon has put his indelible mark on the WWF. Turner hasn't put his

mark on WCW. Who would win a Turner vs. McMahon battle? We'd put our money on Turner. Then again, we thought it would happen about four years ago.

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL WRESTLING

From Japan To London To Atlanta In 36 Hours

IT'S NO COINCIDENCE that the WWF and WCW launched extended European tours several times over the past two years. Both federations have been to England, Germany, and France for the purpose of making new friends in new places.

According to industry insiders, WCW and the WWF are testing the waters before becoming international federations. The NHL, NBA, and NFL have all considered international expansion. The WWF and WCW are planning toward a time when Munich, Paris, and London are part of their regular circuit.

"It's a very small world," said high-ranking WCW official Jim Barnett. "With the SST, it's possible to be over in England in less than three hours and at the most a trip to

Munich doesn't take more than six hours, which isn't much more than a trip from Atlanta to Los Angeles. It's been proven that the people in Europe want WCW and we want to provide them with top-quality wrestling on a regular basis."

The most logical way of going about this is by separating the WWF and WCW into "A" and "B" groups. The A group—which might include the World champion and the TV champion—would tour the U.S. The B group—headed by the U.S. and World tag team champion (or the WWF Intercontinental champion)—would tour Europe. Then the groups would mix and switch over after a set amount of time. Or the WWF and WCW could spend a week each month in Europe.



Wembley Stadium could be a regular site for WWF or WCW cards.

THE FUTURE OF WRESTLING ARENAS

"Builder, Make Me Another Manhattan Center!"

A SMALL WORLD is getting smaller. Throw Japan into the mix and the international possibilities are endless. Add international TV and the financial potential is enormous. Wrestling is about to span the globe. They are the silent, disgruntled minority. They are wrestling promoters, ignored by the major arenas, spurned by politicians. They are a jealous bunch, but who can blame them?

"Look all around you, you see cities building baseball stadiums, football stadiums, and hockey arenas, and they all have one thing in common: They're built to fit their sport," said a Midwestern promoter. "What about wrestling? Where are our arenas? No wonder attendance is down all over."

There once was a time when most arenas were perfect for wrestling. Many of them were built specifically for boxing and wrestling, such as smoky Sunnyside Garden in Queens, New York, and the quaint, recently reopened Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles. Atmospheric Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis was a little bigger, but built along those lines. Most arenas, even the big ones like Boston Garden and the old Madison Square Garden, were built with overhanging balconies to provide a great view of the action. Fans in the upper reaches of these arenas were directly above the ring.

Most of these arenas are rubble, and wrestling fans who want to see what they're paying for must bring binoculars to the matches. Arenas are huge, modern, spacious. Comfortable, but bad for wrestling.

Then Vince McMahon Jr., rediscovered the Manhattan Center, a combination ballroom and hall two blocks from the new Garden, for *WWF Monday Night Raw*. It's small. Cozy. It seats little over a thousand people and has a balcony that hangs over the ring. Perfect for wrestling. And loud, involved crowds are perfect for TV.

The wrestling arena of the future will look much like the Manhattan Center. If the silent minority isn't heard, at least it will help itself. Wrestling needs a few arenas built for wrestling.



The Manhattan Center: an innovation

You Won't Believe What You See

THE FUTURE OF RIC FLAIR

A League Of His Own

THERE WAS A moment during the long limousine ride from his house to the arena prior to Starrcade '93 when a devastating thought crossed Ric Flair's mind. It was the obvious followup thought to, *What if I lose?*, but he had never dared think it before.

"I started to think, *Then what do I do?*" Flair recalled. "I'm not lacking for money or things to do with my spare time, but I'm too young to sit in a rocking chair on my porch and while the time away. And I don't think I'm cut out for spending the rest of my life speaking into a microphone."

Perhaps this harrowing thought—that although it might be *time* to retire, it wasn't quite *the* time to retire—spurred Flair to victory over Vader for the WCW World title.

Indeed, it is hard to picture Flair in one of the typical post-wrestling careers as an announcer, promoter, or commissioner. (He is among several wrestlers who own fitness facilities.) A more reasonable picture is of Flair in his rightful spot—the man in charge.

With a league of his own.

Perhaps one day Ted Turner will sell WCW. Perhaps legal circumstances will create a situation where the WWF goes on the open market. Or maybe Flair will simply start his own federation and nurture it into a giant-killer.

Flair has spent his entire career making an impact. The Flair Wrestling Federation (for lack of a better name) could be his greatest impact of all.

THE FUTURE OF HULK HOGAN

Tinsel Town Finally Wins

SINCE 1981, WHEN he appeared as Thunderlips in *Rocky III*, Hulk Hogan has faced a career dilemma: wrestling or Hollywood?

This might seem rather humorous to the movie-goers and critics who realized a long time ago that the "Hulkster" is a far better wrestler than actor. His star vehicles have all crashed ... without an airbag.

No Holds Barred should have been banned.

Suburban Commando had its moments, but was generally blah.

Mr. Nanny couldn't even get tutu stars.

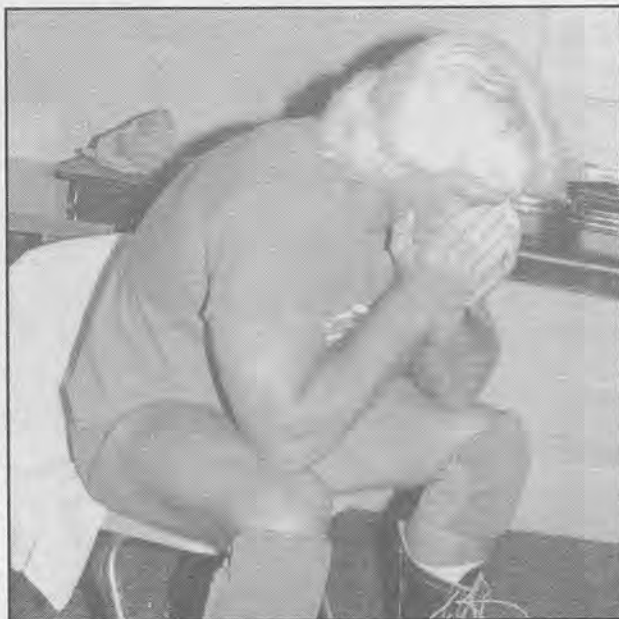
But Hollywood, realizing Hogan's popularity, is still searching for his niche, and Hogan's body is telling him one thing: Stay away from the ring. For good.

Of course, there's a good chance we'll see Hogan vs. Ric Flair in WCW before 1994 ends. Many insiders feel it will happen at either The Great American Bash or Starrcade '94. That, however, will be the final hurrah in Hogan's career, the final comeback.

He is destined for the silver screen. Or, considering the success of the TV action series *Thunder In Paradise*, the small screen.

"Hogan made his name on TV as a wrestling star," said a Hollywood insider. "Maybe that's where he belongs, on TV, where attention spans are shorter and the audience isn't quite as selective. You know, a lot of movies that bomb in the theaters are very popular on home video or the premium movie stations, like HBO and Showtime. Hogan just might do fine in a TV series."

Get used to that tanned face with the stringy, blond hair. Hogan's going to be around for a while.



Look for Flair to become an owner.



Look for the "Hulkster" in Hollywood.

THE FUTURE OF THE PROTOTYPICAL WRESTLING PHYSIQUE

Part Man, Part Kid, Part Machine

PITY THE POOR, confused up-and-coming star. If you're a 16-year-old trying to build your body for wrestling, which catalog do you choose?

How about *The Kid's Guide To Less Is More*, in which a scrawny weakling beats up on the big boys by designing a streamlined, skin and bones body that's perfect for aerial flight.

Or how about *Yokozuna And Vader's Guide To More Is More*, in which two wrestlers whose muscle is covered by layers of fat reach the top of their respective federations by out-bulking everyone else.

Or how about *Sting's Guide To Muscle Is More*, in which the proper amount of muscle—not too bulky and in just the right places—turns a surfer into a star.

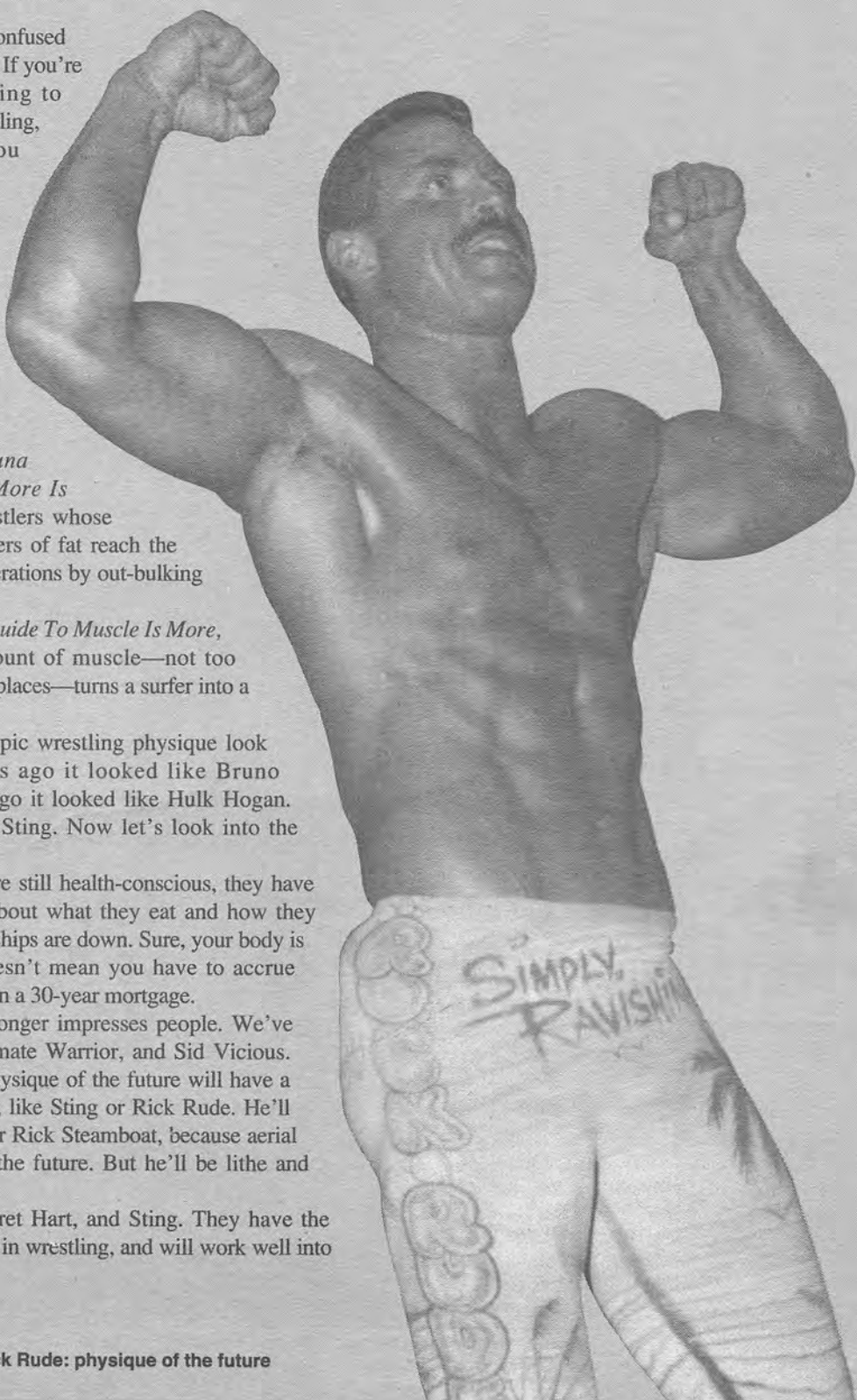
What does the prototypic wrestling physique look like? Twenty-five years ago it looked like Bruno Sammartino. Ten years ago it looked like Hulk Hogan. These days it looks like Sting. Now let's look into the future.

Although Americans are still health-conscious, they have become less concerned about what they eat and how they look. Health club memberships are down. Sure, your body is your temple, but that doesn't mean you have to accrue muscle mass like interest on a 30-year mortgage.

Incredible muscle no longer impresses people. We've all seen Hogan, The Ultimate Warrior, and Sid Vicious. Ho-hum. The wrestling physique of the future will have a healthy amount of muscle, like Sting or Rick Rude. He'll be built to fly, like Sting or Rick Steamboat, because aerial wrestling is the wave of the future. But he'll be lithe and mobile.

Look at Rick Rude, Bret Hart, and Sting. They have the bodies that always worked in wrestling, and will work well into the next century.

Rick Rude: physique of the future



THE FUTURE OF THE WRESTLING FAN

"You Mean You Could Go To The Matches"

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE the thrill of a live sporting event. Find a single sports fan who wouldn't have wanted to be there when Joe Carter won the World Series for the Blue Jays last year or when John Paxson hit a three-pointer in Game 6 of the NBA Finals. Starrcade '93 was a beauty, too, especially for the fans in Charlotte, North Carolina.

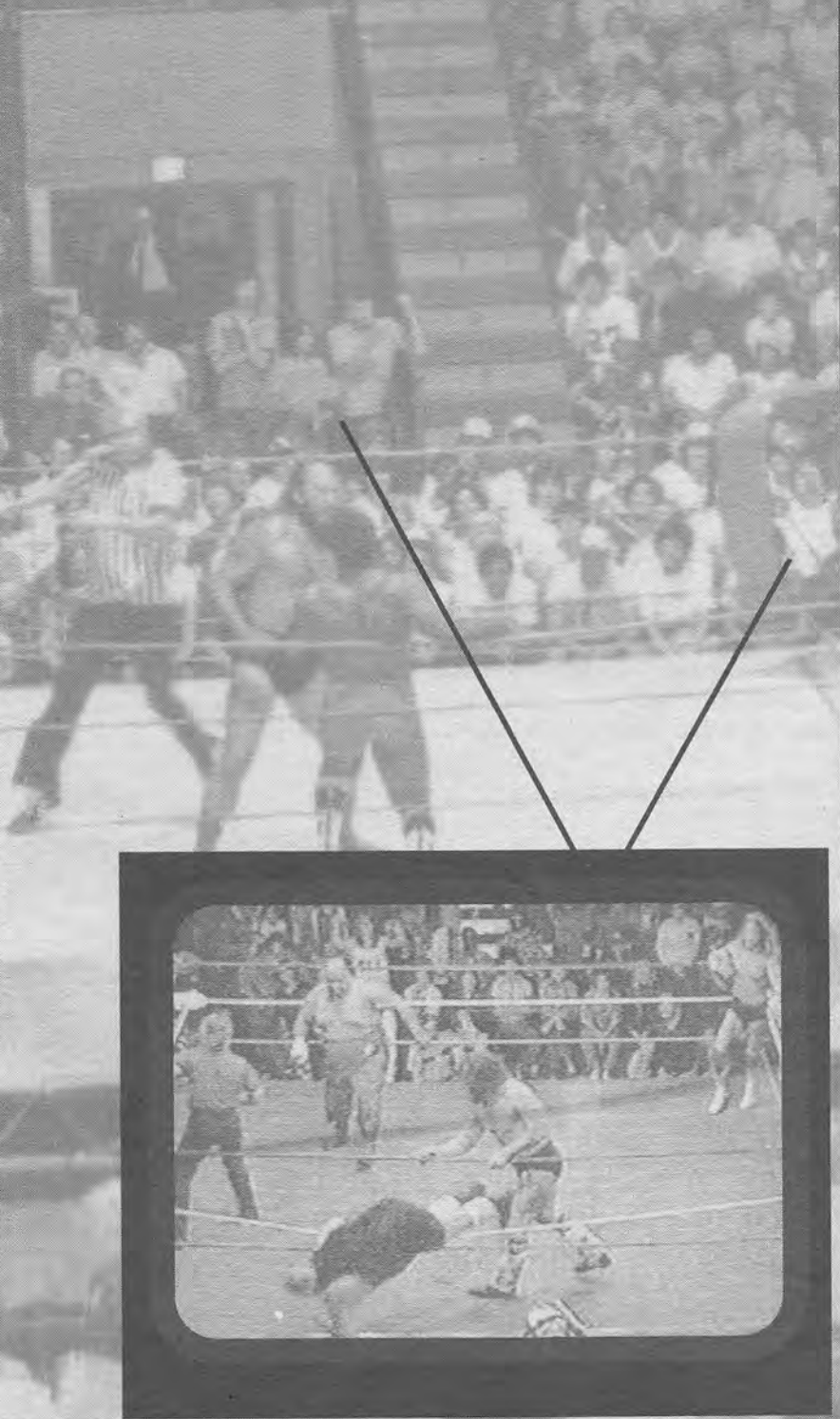
Live sports. It's a great thing.

But imagine if you could see a live card every week on TV. Imagine if technology became so advanced in the future that watching wrestling on TV would be just about the same as being there. You could pick your seat, or camera angle, and even choose when you wanted to watch the event. The sound of the simulated crowd fills your home. The TV creates a marvelous, realistic 3-D effect.

And you never have to leave your home, mess with traffic, and pay for parking. The popcorn costs pennies a serving. The soda is plentiful.

The sad fact of the matter is that wrestling's trend is toward home viewership. Ticket prices are rising. Attendance is falling. TV is our preferred medium. Promoters will hold their cards in smaller, quainter arenas to accommodate those who still like their wrestling live and almost touchable.

Everyone else will stay home and enjoy the show.



Live wrestling will be out; televised wrestling will be in.

THE FUTURE OF CAGED MATCHES

"Literally, Uncaged Fury"

THE FUTURE IS typically depicted in movies and literature as a violent time when anarchy reigns and the man with the most guns win. In a time when wars no longer exist, *Rollerball* will be the sport of the future. In *Escape From New York*, the entire island of Manhattan is a maximum security prison.

The world seems to be going along with its fictional fate. Street and domestic violence is widespread—almost accepted as a fact of life—and we are running out of places to put our criminals. Sports, too, seem to be getting more violent.

But Andrew W. Friedman, a noted

sociologist based in New York City, has seen subtle clues that suggest we aren't necessarily headed for a violent future.

"Little by little, society is beginning to study its actions in an attempt to find a way around the violence," said Dr. Friedman. "We realize we are killing ourselves. For example, African-American society in the U.S. realizes that, for the most part, young blacks are killing young blacks. Drugs are being sold mostly among themselves. Realizing this is step one toward becoming a less violent society."

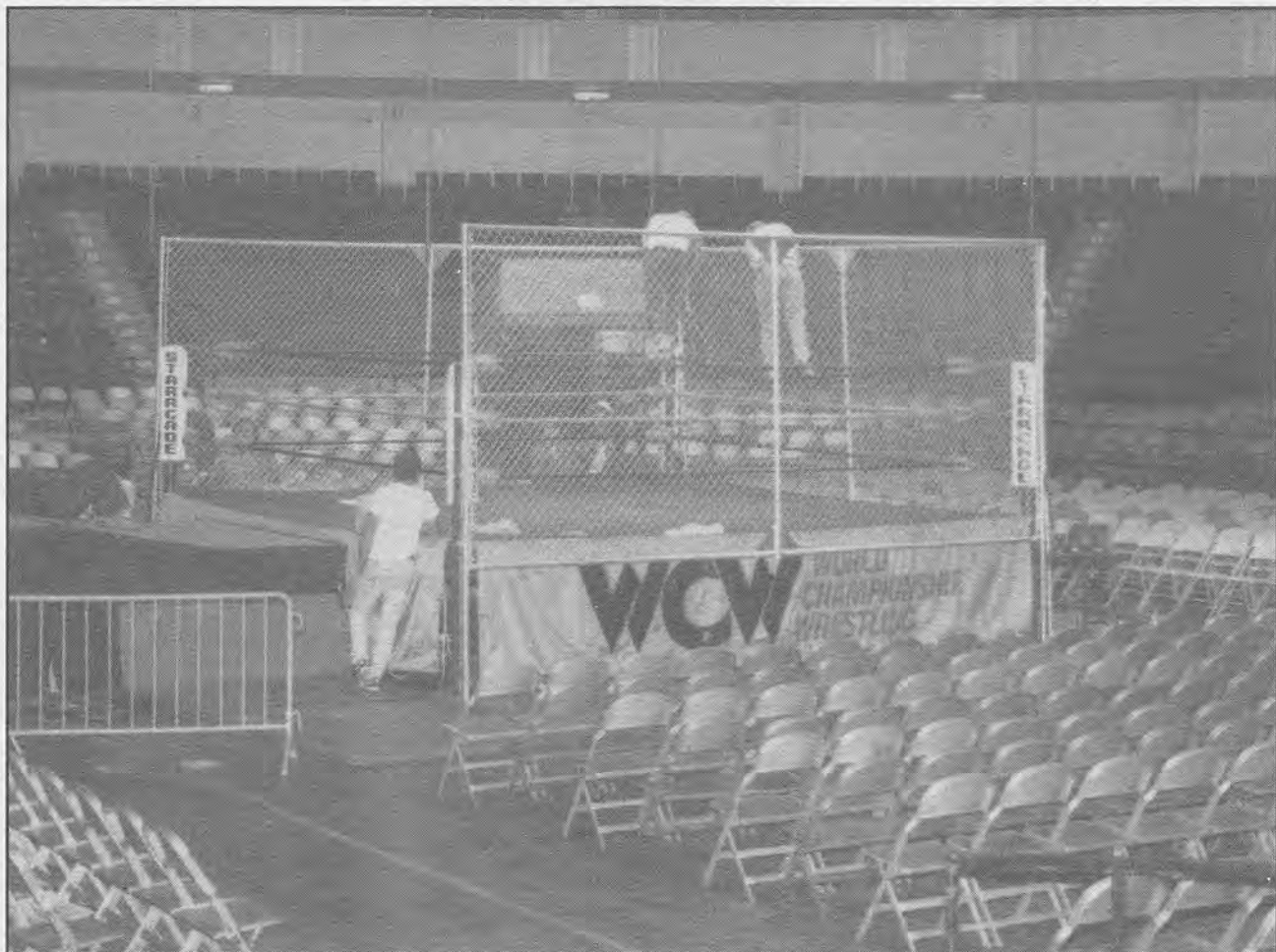
Now let's compare this sociological condition to professional wrestling. For

years, cage matches have been seen as an end-all to long-running feuds. When two men have been going at it for months, or years, promoters throw them into a cage and let them settle things once and for all.

Most fans know from experience that this solution usually doesn't work. Violence doesn't solve problems created by violence. It only worsens the situation.

Wrestlers, fans, and promoters are starting to notice this. The number of cage matches decreased in 1993 and is expected to drop further in 1994. The WWF rarely holds them.

The future of cage matches is no cage matches.



The steel cage could become wrestling history.

THE FUTURE OF WRESTLING MAGAZINES

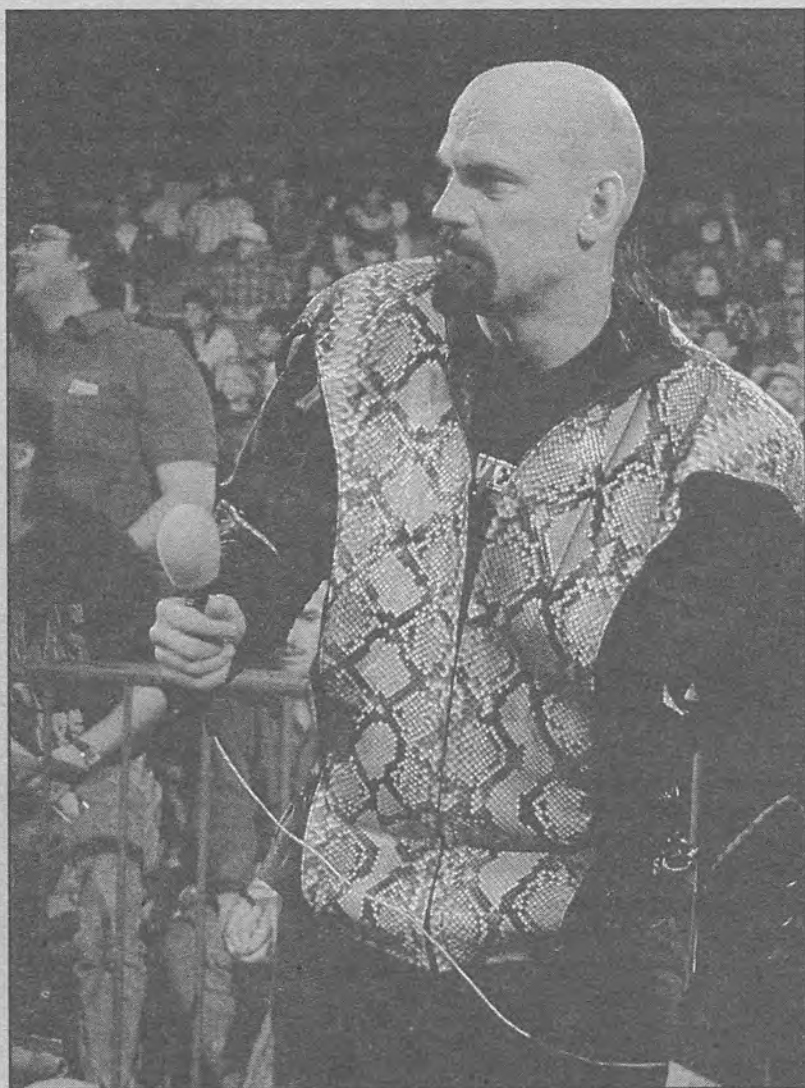
"Touch Me, Feel Me"

STU SAKS, PUBLISHER of *INSIDE WRESTLING* and its many sister publications, revealed to his staff recently that the future of wrestling magazines could be in 3-D productions that don't require props or glasses. "Three-dimensional print technology is moving along very rapidly," Saks reported. "When it arrives, its impact could be felt greatly by the wrestling magazine industry."

THE FUTURE OF WRESTLING ANNOUNCERS

Telling One Side Of The Story

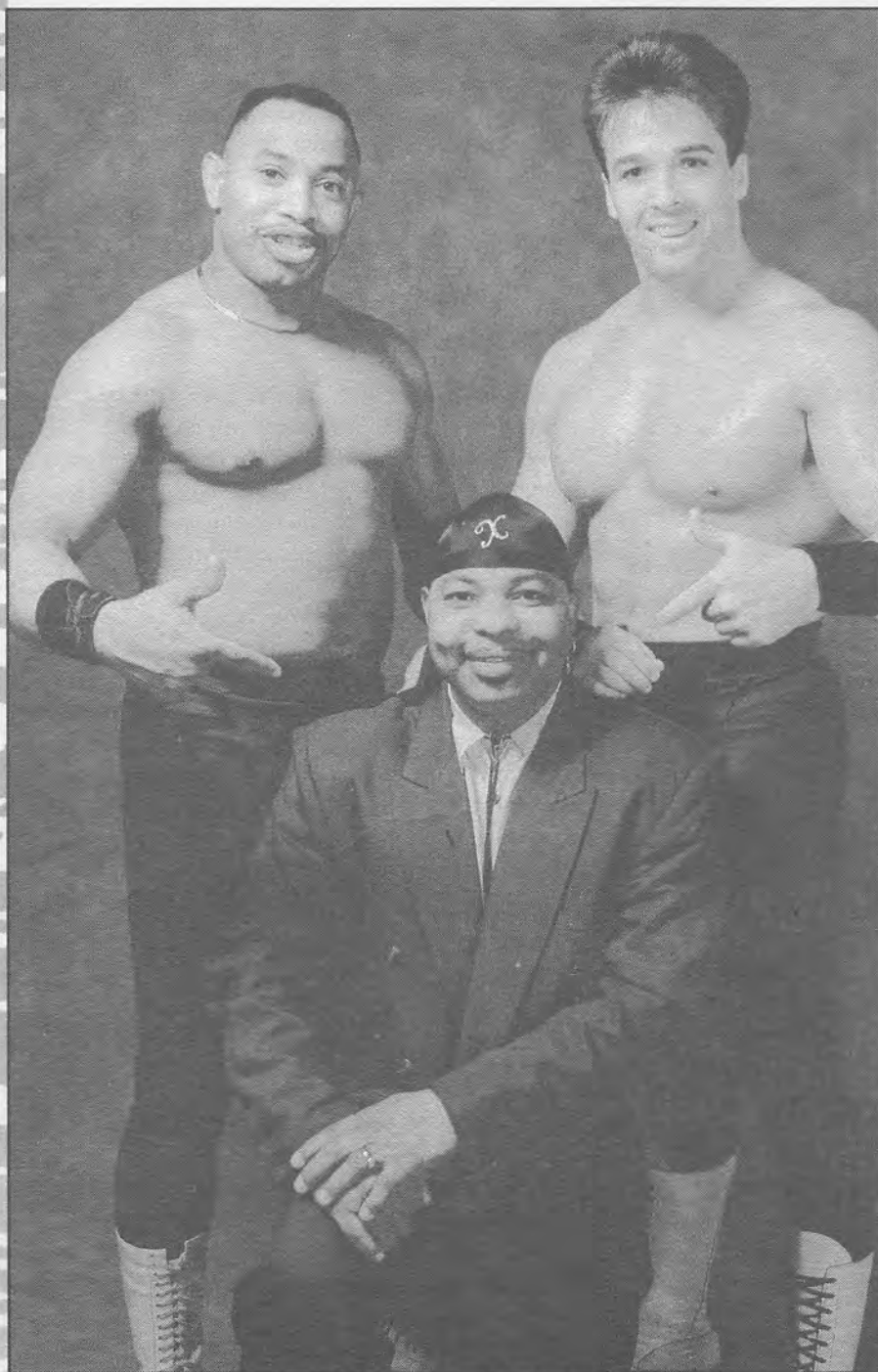
JESSE "THE BODY" Ventura changed the way wrestling commentators work when he brought his brash, arrogant, call-them-as-I-think-I-see-them style to WWF broadcasts. Now in WCW, Ventura is more popular than ever. The idea that a commentator must be impartial no longer exists. They're allowed to have opinions. Although Ventura has become a more even-handed commentator, WCW recently acquired the services of the one-sided Bobby "The Brain" Heenan. The message: Infotainment is better than information.



Jesse Ventura: telling it like it is

THE FUTURE OF MANAGERS

Hands Off!



Teddy Long does a lot of work behind the scenes.

MANAGERS ADD color to wrestling. The sport would be far less exciting without the influence of Capt. Lou Albano, The Grand Wizard, J.J. Dillon, Bobby Heenan, Jim Cornette, Paul E. Dangerously, Mr. Fuji, and other cult managerial figures.

The problem is that managers can't keep their hands to themselves. Mr. Fuji interfered twice in one day at WrestleMania IX and changed the course of WWF World title history. For Paul E. Dangerously, happiness is a bloody cellular telephone. Jim Cornette loves brandishing his mighty tennis racket. Harley Race can't resist any opportunity to interfere.

Wrestling's movers and shakers will one day have to deal with this problem, and there's really only one solution: banning managers from ringside and letting them get no closer than the first few rows of seats, with a steel barrier separating them from the action.

"Besides, a lot of wrestlers are getting sick and tired of their managers costing them matches," said a WWF rulebreaker. "Interference doesn't always work."

The future of wrestling managers, believe it or not, is Teddy Long. For months, nobody knew Long was managing 2 Cold Scorpio and Marcus Alexander Bagwell because he did his work behind the scenes.

The manager behind the scenes. Wrestling might be a less colorful place, but at least there'll be interviews.

THE FUTURE OF WORLD TITLE MATCHES

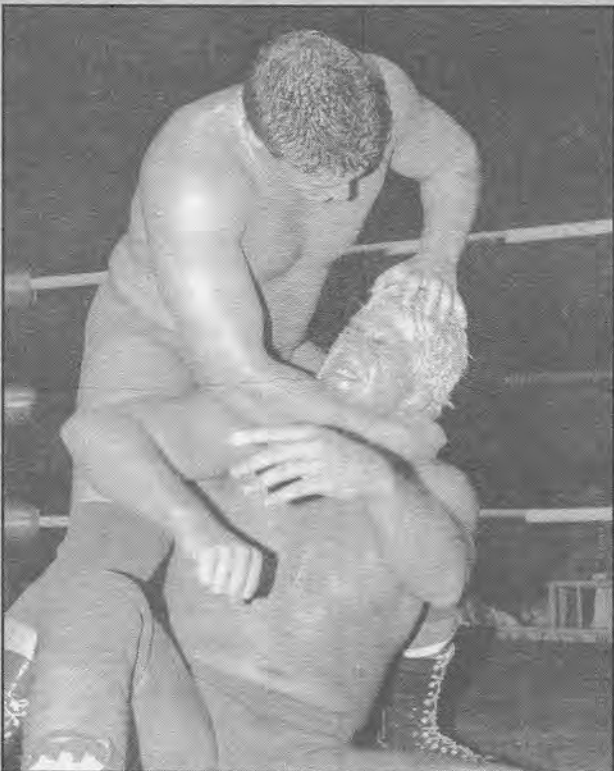
Near-Perfection Just Isn't Enough

LORD STEVEN REGAL, trendsetter? Indeed, the WCW TV champion acted upon what many champions before him often thought about when he placed restrictions on his challengers: Beat him in 15 minutes, or forget about winning the TV title.

For decades, wrestling's champions have faced the toughest tests in all of sports. Boxing champions might defend their titles two or three times a year. Wrestling champions defend their titles two or three times a week and are criticized if they don't. Of course, it doesn't matter if a wrestler wins 100 consecutive defenses. A loss in the 101st match—and a 100-1 record—will cost him the title.

Is this fair? Of course not. Although champions can save their belts by getting disqualified, the pool of challengers clearly has the edge. "Enough of this!" shouted Regal, the first champion of champion's rights.

Regal struck the first blow. Don't be surprised if other champions start putting similar restrictions on their defenses. It will happen, because something just isn't right when so much is asked of champions.



Lord Steven Regal: champion trendsetter

THE FUTURE OF TAG TEAM MATCHES

Cut The Cord

THE MOST SUBTLE and most important element of any tag team match is the little cords that hang from two opposite corners of the ring. This cord must be touched by the wrestler outside of the ring if he hopes to tag into the ring.

The rule makes sense. It prevents wrestlers from running around the ring apron in an attempt to make a tag. But it also forces referees to see too much. Sometimes it's impossible for a referee to tell whether a wrestler made a tag. Matches have been won and lost on these rulings.

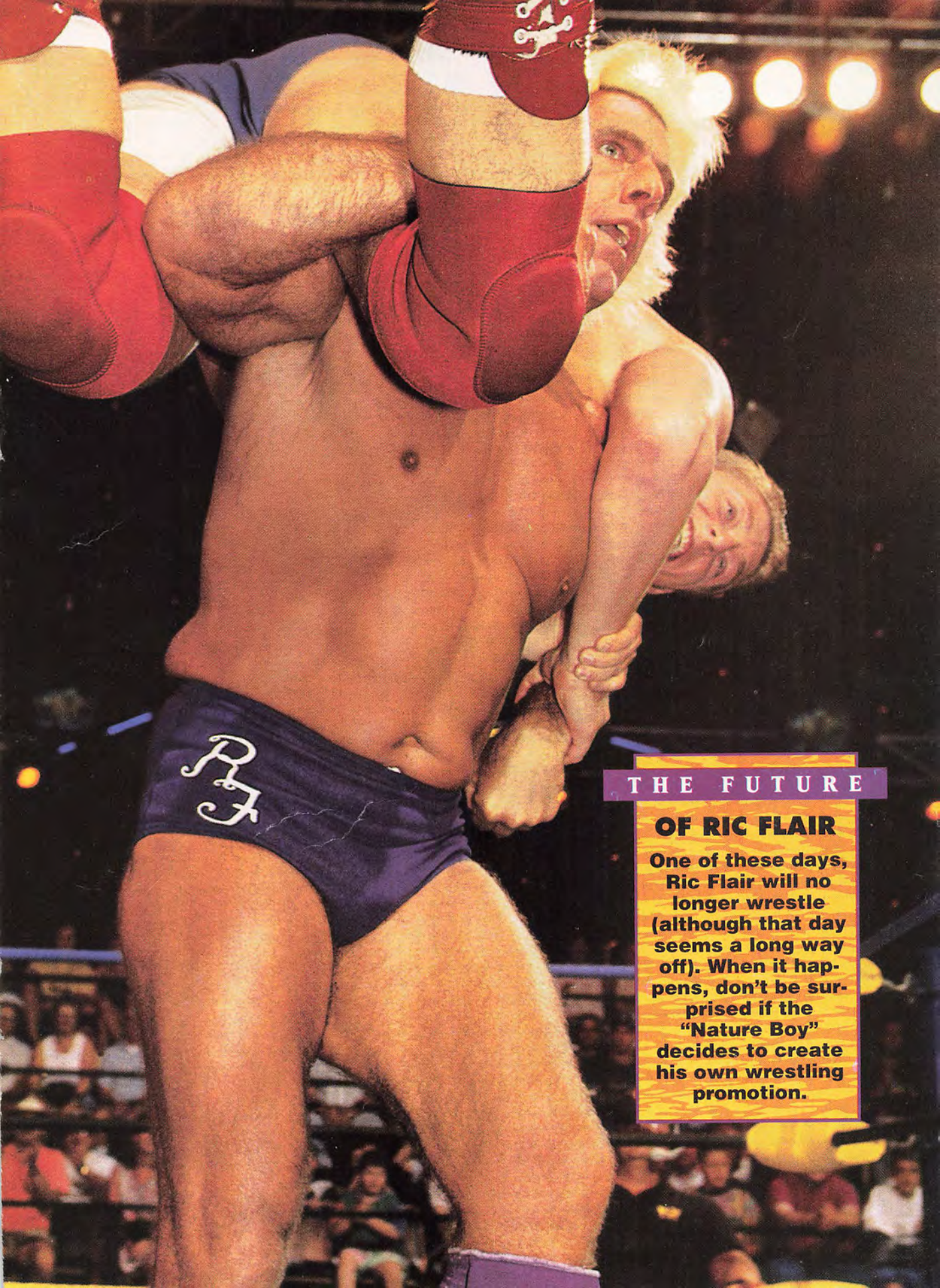
The cord is too primitive. Surely, there must be a better way. There is ... or at least there will be.

Technology is nearly in that place that can aid referees dramatically and eliminate controversy over tags. The answer, according to techno-scientists, is to run the cord through a device that would either light up or buzz when a tag is made. For example, the wrestler outside the ring holds on to the rope. When a tag is made—completing the circuit—the device activates.

One problem is designing a way for the device to discern the partner's hand from the opponent's hand, or even the outside-wrestler's left hand from his right. The answer could be in computer identification; in other words, prior to each match, the device would be programmed to make these IDs, much as high-tech security devices discern voice and touch.



Brian Knobs clings to the tag rope.



THE FUTURE

OF RIC FLAIR

One of these days, Ric Flair will no longer wrestle (although that day seems a long way off). When it happens, don't be surprised if the "Nature Boy" decides to create his own wrestling promotion.





THE FUTURE OF HULK HOGAN

As a wrestler, Hulk Hogan was famous for inviting the "beautiful people" to his victory celebrations. As an actor, his future guests will still be beautiful, but the parties (which will always include buddies Brutus Beefcake, Jimmy Hart, and Jim Neidhart) should have a decidedly Hollywood bent.



THE FUTURE

OF AERIAL WRESTLING

Sabu (preparing to scissors-flip Rob Van Dam) owns arguably the most talent and charisma of any aerial wrestler. What makes him truly unique, however, is the manner in which he combines his athletic acumen with his ferocious disposition.

RON SIMMONS

The Boss has taken his corrective measures to Ron Simmons, but Simmons isn't standing for it. Boss wants to change Simmons, but Simmons isn't listening

"I'LL SHOW

WCW WHO'S

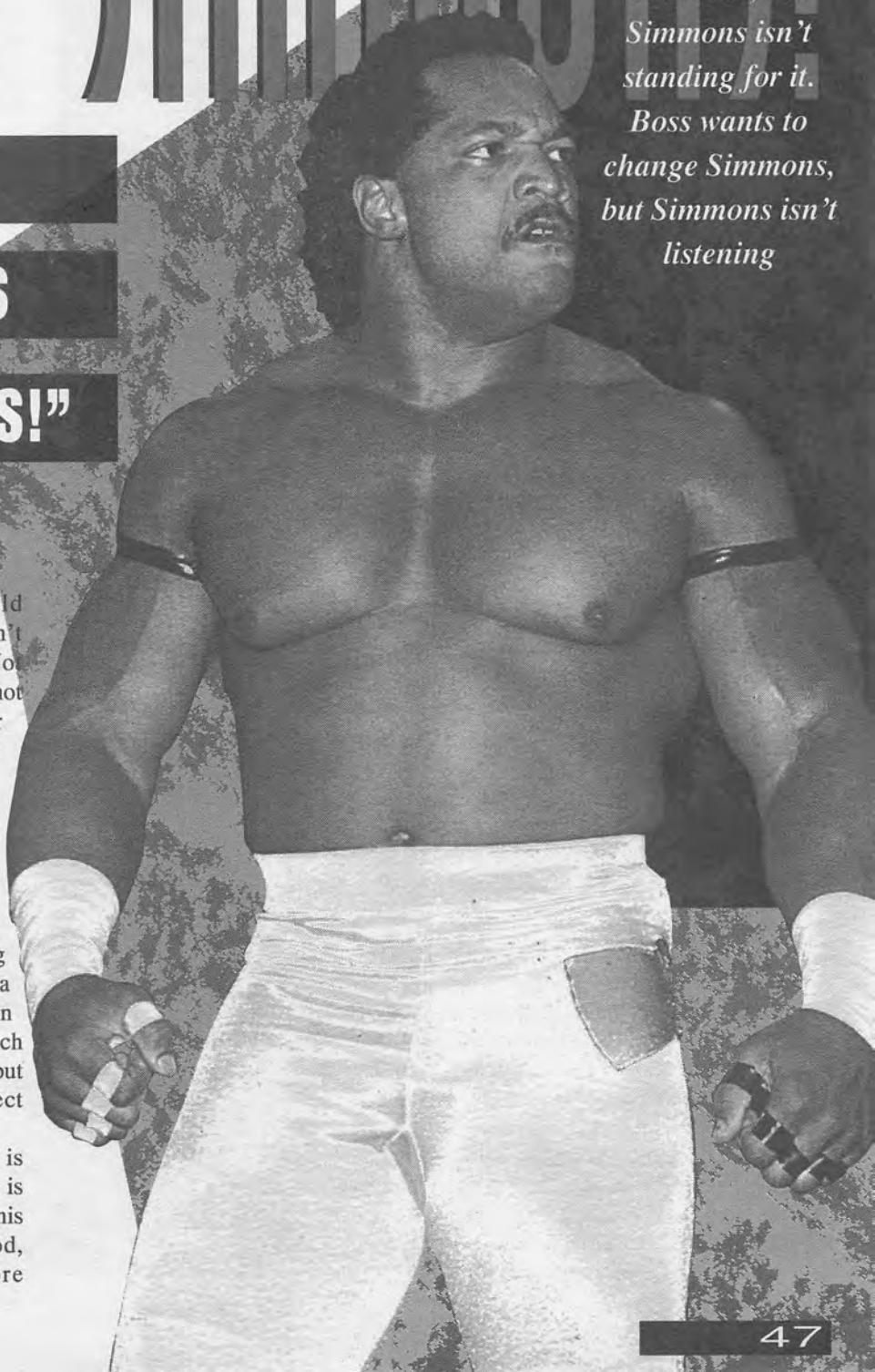
REALLY BOSS!"

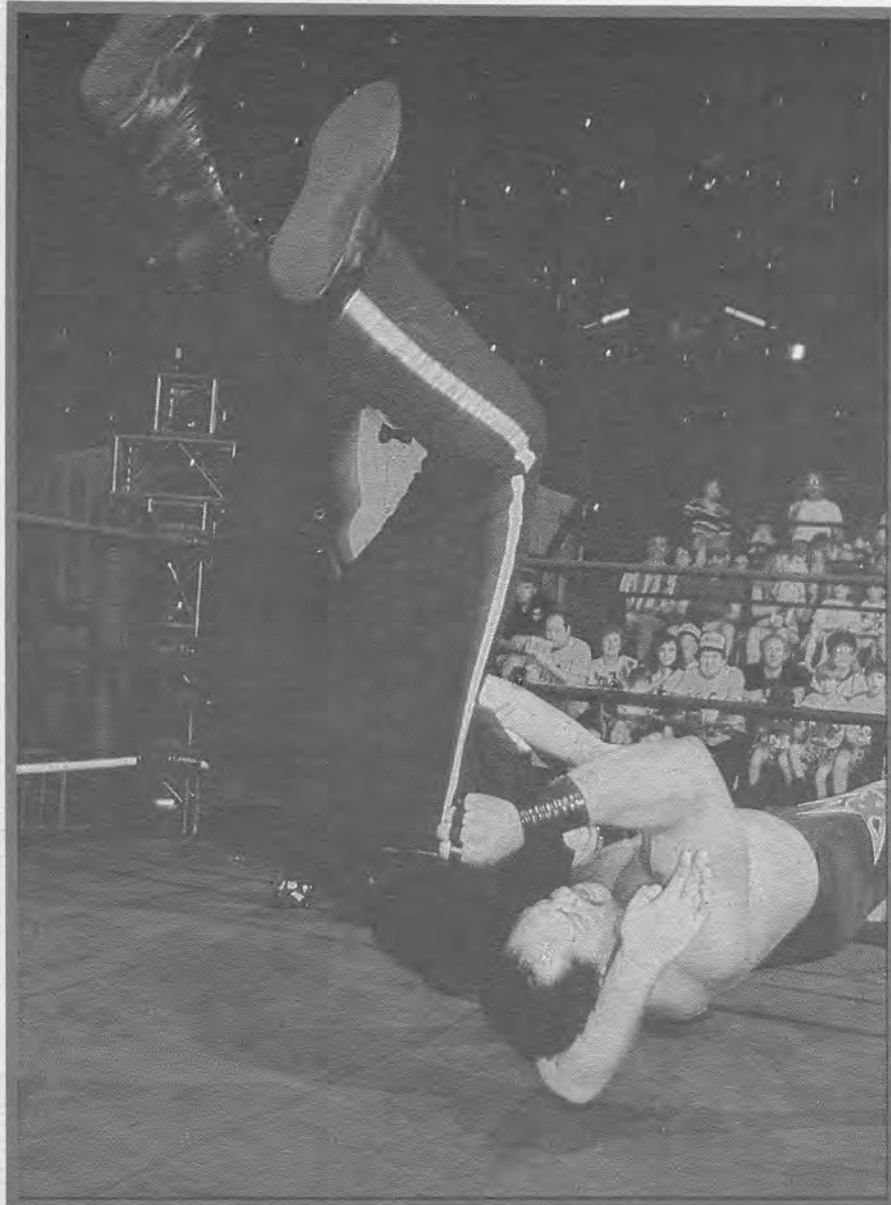
By Kostya Kennedy

NO ONE LIKES being told what to do when they don't want to do it. Nobody. Not good guys, not bad guys, not you, not me. There are probably a greater number of popular garden slugs in this country than popular bosses.

The worst is when the boss puts himself or herself on some morally superior ground. They'll look at you when you come five minutes late to work and react as though they'd never do anything like that. They pretend that a Monday morning hangover is an unpardonable sin the likes of which they've never known. They try to put their values onto yours and expect you to follow cheerfully along.

That's exactly what The Boss is doing to Ron Simmons. True, Boss is one of the few well-liked men of his kind, and yes, his values of good, honest wrestling seem far more





Ron Simmons tries to suplex The Boss during a recent match. Simmons is upset that Boss is trying to take matters into his own hands, and vows he won't get away with it.

rational than Simmons' sudden break-any-rule-to-win attitude.

But from Simmons' perspective, Boss is just another meddling character, another guy trying to stick his nose where it doesn't belong. Someone trying to make people see things the same way he does.

"Look, I do things Ron Simmons' way and that's it," Simmons said after a recent workout, sweat dripping from his massive arms. "The Boss thinks he's gonna go around and 'clean up'

WCW. What the hell does that mean? I don't need him cleaning me up. I'm gonna show WCW who's *really* boss!

"I'm working hard each and every day, trying to win back a title that is rightfully mine. And no matter how I do it, I'm going to get it—that's my vow. No ifs, no ands, no buts. I'm sorry, Boss, but that's my idea of community service."

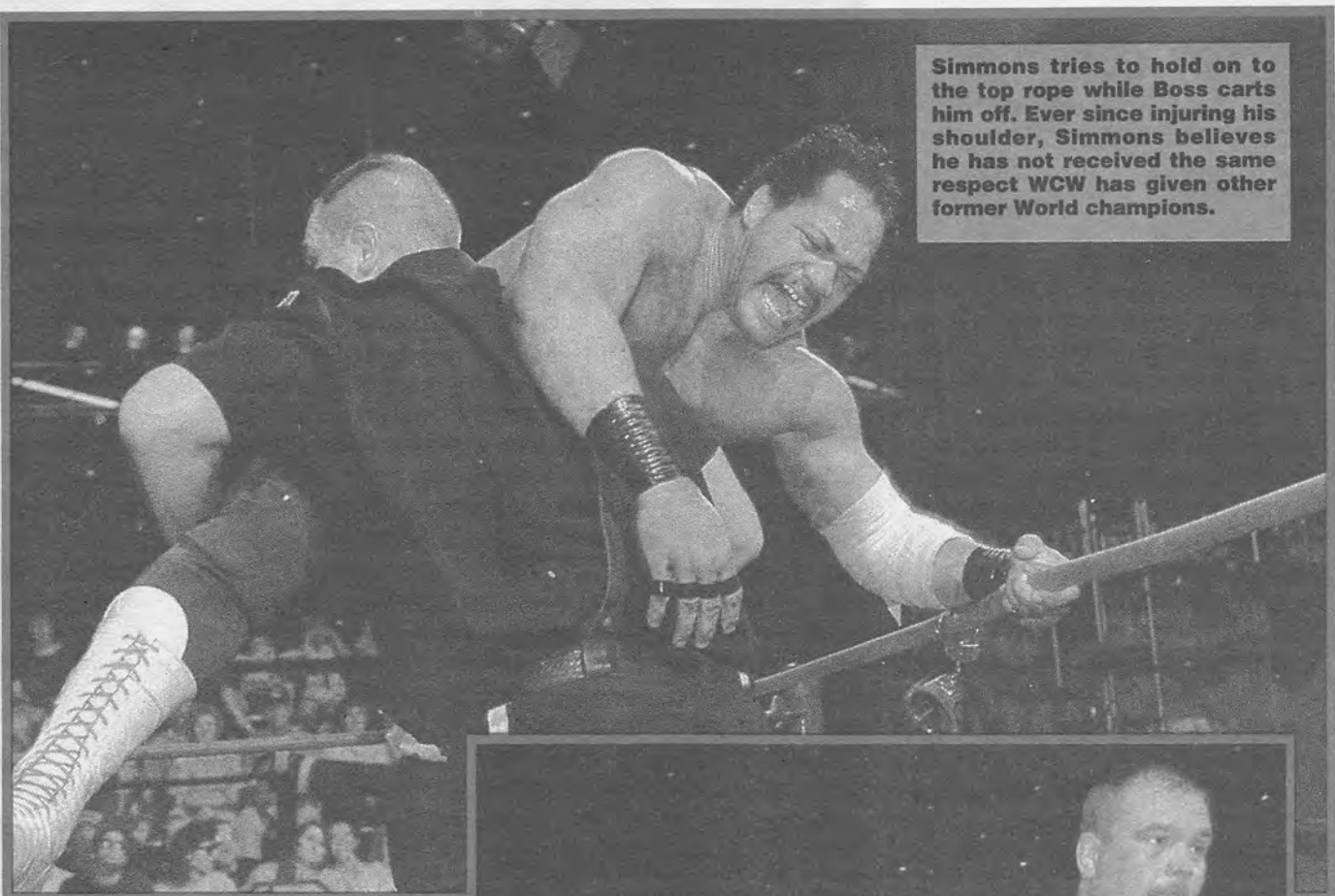
It wasn't long ago that Simmons was himself a character of upstanding moral values. As WCW champion in 1992, he was loath to break the rules. He earned his title by being a dynamic and forceful wrestler. He was respected, even loved, by many fans.

But the shoulder injury that took him off the title throne, and his subsequent frustrated battle to bounce back in WCW, drove Simmons back to the mindset that guided him when he was a member of the dreaded Doom with Butch Reed several years ago.

"Other champion wrestlers suffered injuries and were later put in the hunt for a title. I get injured and become a nonentity," Simmons said with a sigh of frustration. "What

Boss is in pain, courtesy of the rulebreaking Simmons. Nevertheless, Boss believes the former WCW World champion can be rehabilitated.





Simmons tries to hold on to the top rope while Boss carts him off. Ever since injuring his shoulder, Simmons believes he has not received the same respect WCW has given other former World champions.

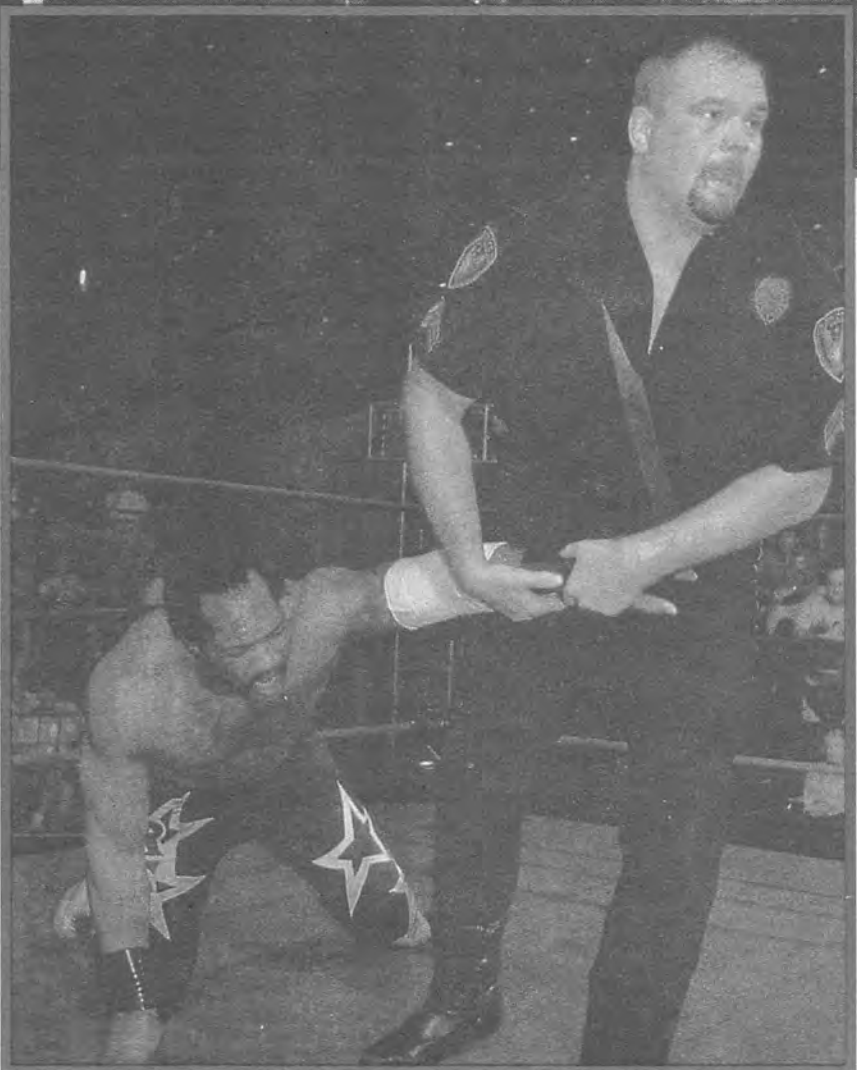
gives? Tell me. Explain the double-standard."

When Simmons wants to be good, he can be exemplary. But now that he's decided to be bad, he is very, very bad.

"Simmons is a special case," Boss said. "I really believe that I can get this guy to change, even if it means using some intimidation and giving some hard lessons. I respect the man as a wrestler, but something has gotten to him.

"I'm not a psychologist, so I'm not about to analyze, but I've heard he feels that WCW hasn't given him the same treatment other former champions received. If he didn't get it, that was wrong, but that's the past now—kind of like a statute of limitations—

(Continued on page 72)



The title-hungry Simmons, who now embraces rulebreaking for what he thinks are practical reasons, isn't only angry at WCW. He doesn't like people thinking that Boss can outwrestle him.

IT STARTED AS A JOKE

From the seeds of promoters' laughter bloomed a feud for the ages. Without any doubt, these are among the biggest matches the WWF has seen in the past few years

By Kostya Kennedy

THEY WERE LAUGHING. Flat out laughing. These WWF promoters, dressed to the hilt in bad-looking suits (one wore a brown felt three-piece), were filling the entire hotel conference room, the plush carpeted hallway, and even the outskirts of the lobby with the sound of loud and uncontrolled laughter.

"I do wish they'd quiet down," said a hotel employee as he passed through the hall. "What could possibly be that funny?"

Earthquake vs. Bastion Booger, he was told. That's what.

"Ohhhh," the employee chuckled. "That is funny!"

Earthquake vs. Booger. The mere sound of the sentence is enough to make a wrestling fan giggle in spite of himself. And at that mid-winter conference of WWF promoters when

EARTHQUAKE



IT EXPLODED INTO A WAR

At first, pitting Earthquake against Bastion Booger seemed almost comic, as any matchup of men their size might be. But no one's laughing now. The rivalry between these two has grown in its intensity.



VS. BOOGER

one Northeast veteran suggested pitting the massive Earthquake against the even more tremendous Booger, the giggles swept through the room. And when the promoters began to consider the possibility as a reality, that's when the laughter really hit.

After all, these guys would be hilarious to watch flopping around the ring, the promoters thought. They'd lumber slowly forward, big bellies swaying to and fro. Their soft chests would hang, low and prominent. They would snort and belch as a matter of course. They'd wrap each other in big, bad-intentioned bearhugs and squeeze.

No, it wouldn't be the most athletic event the WWF ever produced, but it was worth putting the pork-bellied pair out there for a few matches just for the heck of it. Sports and entertainment do go hand-in-hand.

"We figured it would be tons of fun," said one of the promoters in attendance that gleeful afternoon. "Or a half-ton of fun anyway. We didn't look at it as serious competition though. I guess we were a little naive."

If the promoters still smile these days when the Earthquake-Booger matches are mentioned, it's not out of pure hilarity, but with a degree of satisfaction. Those matches have developed into more than just good entertainment. The duo is embroiled in a rip-roaring feud, a burgeoning war the likes of which the WWF—or any federation for that matter—rarely sees.

"We didn't realize how athletic and



Earthquake defies the law of gravity with a flying dropkick. Rarely is 'Quake in a position where he will have more speed and agility than his opponent.

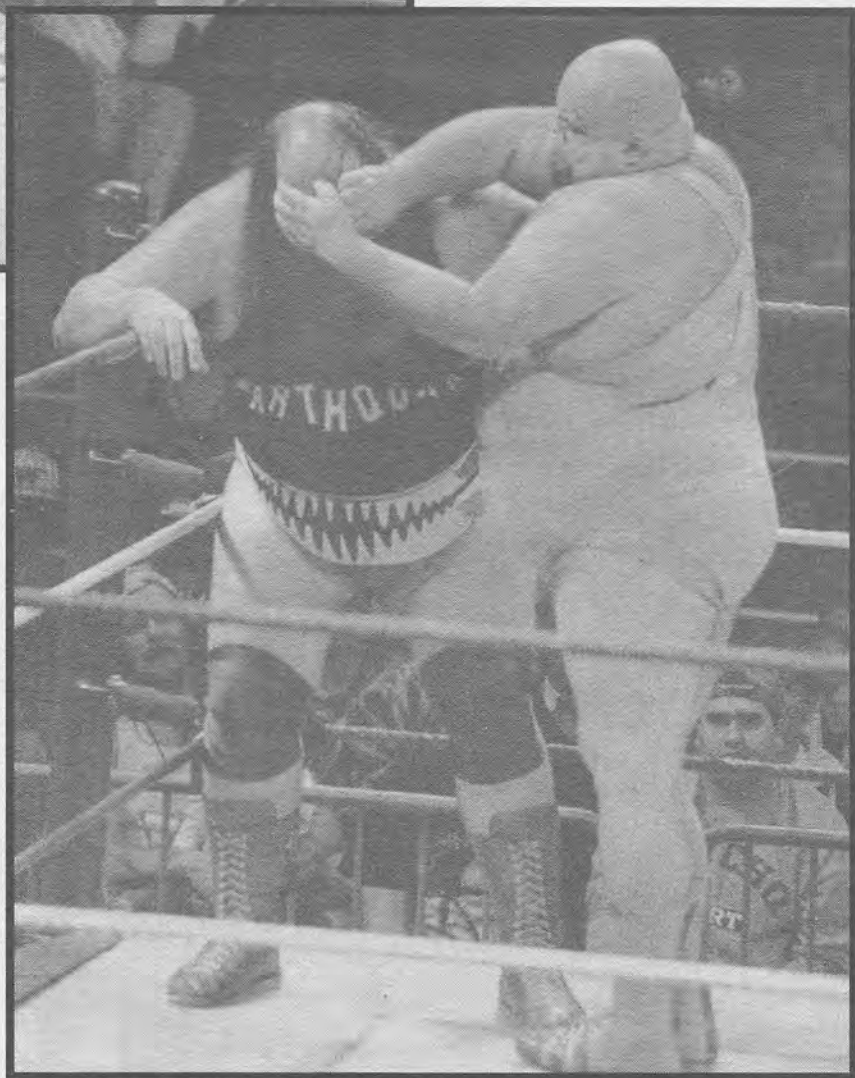
determined these men are," the promoter said. "They're smooth out there, and they're fighting these matches as if their lives depended on them. It's great for wrestling. To be honest, I was one of the guys who laughed the hardest at the time. These guys have really proven something to me."

In Earthquake, the promoters might have known what to expect. The big, balding hulk of a man has been proving himself a worthy athlete for some time. He was, we all remember, one of the WWF's real powers when he teamed with Typhoon to form The Natural Disasters. The team beat Money Inc. for the WWF World tag team title in 1992 with its dangerous combination of strength, intensity, and enough ring savvy to get by.

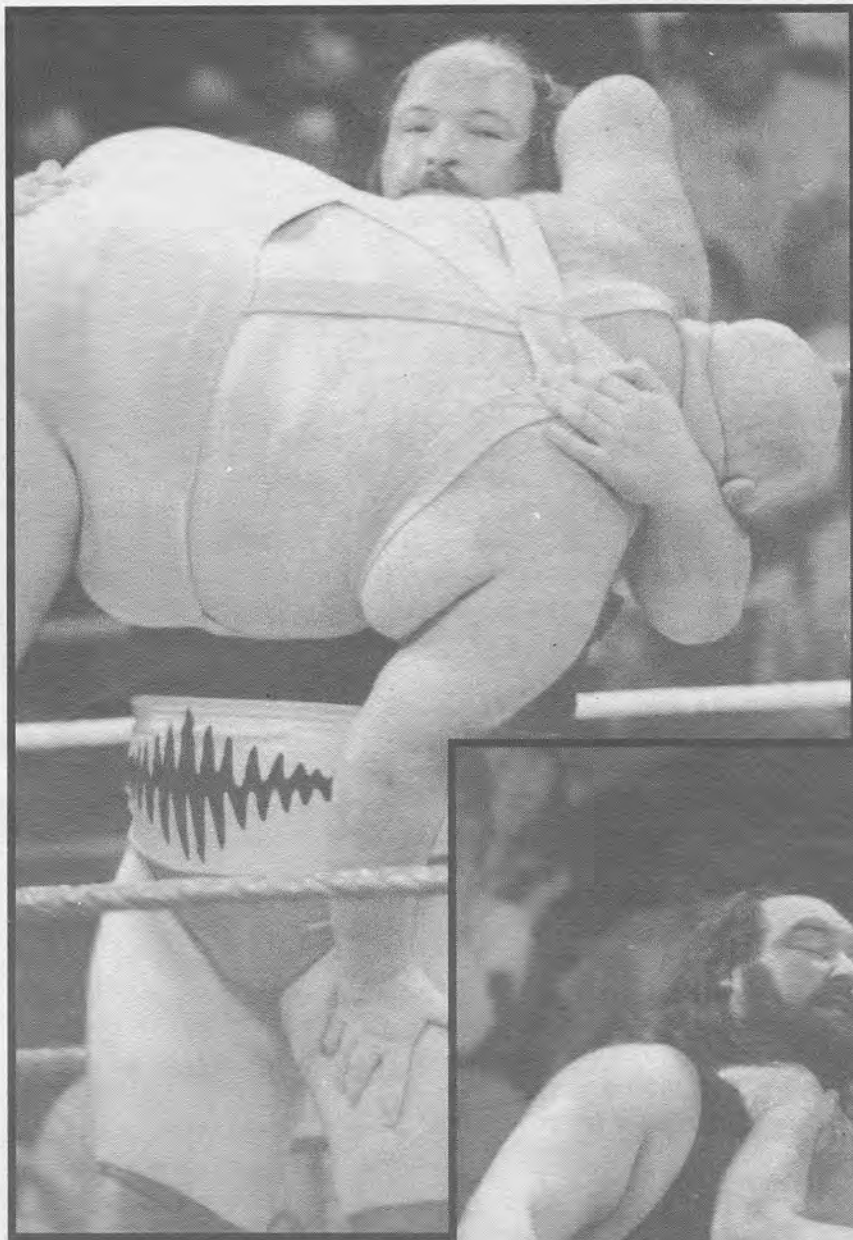
More recently, prior to his thrilling re-emergence in the WWF, Earthquake got himself into shape against

some of the quickest, highest-flying wrestlers in Japan. Earthquake is a man who meets challenges and adversity head on, a man of great confidence and little fear. He doesn't have a tattoo covering his huge bicep for nothing.

"Earthquake is a keeper," WWF expert Thomas Piliard said. "He's got great physical tools and he's learning how to use them more and more every day. Booger isn't all that different—only he's fatter! Neither of these guys ever back off and they both have some hidden ability that comes forth when a match is on the line. That's why this feud is becoming



Booger, who's trying to get at Earthquake's eyes, is one wrestler who 'Quake can't dominate physically. Give Booger credit for rapid improvement over the past few months.



Booger saw what a big man could do with size. He learned from the beating and vowed to better himself. More specifically, Booger vowed revenge on Earthquake. And these days he's not stopping at anything to get it.

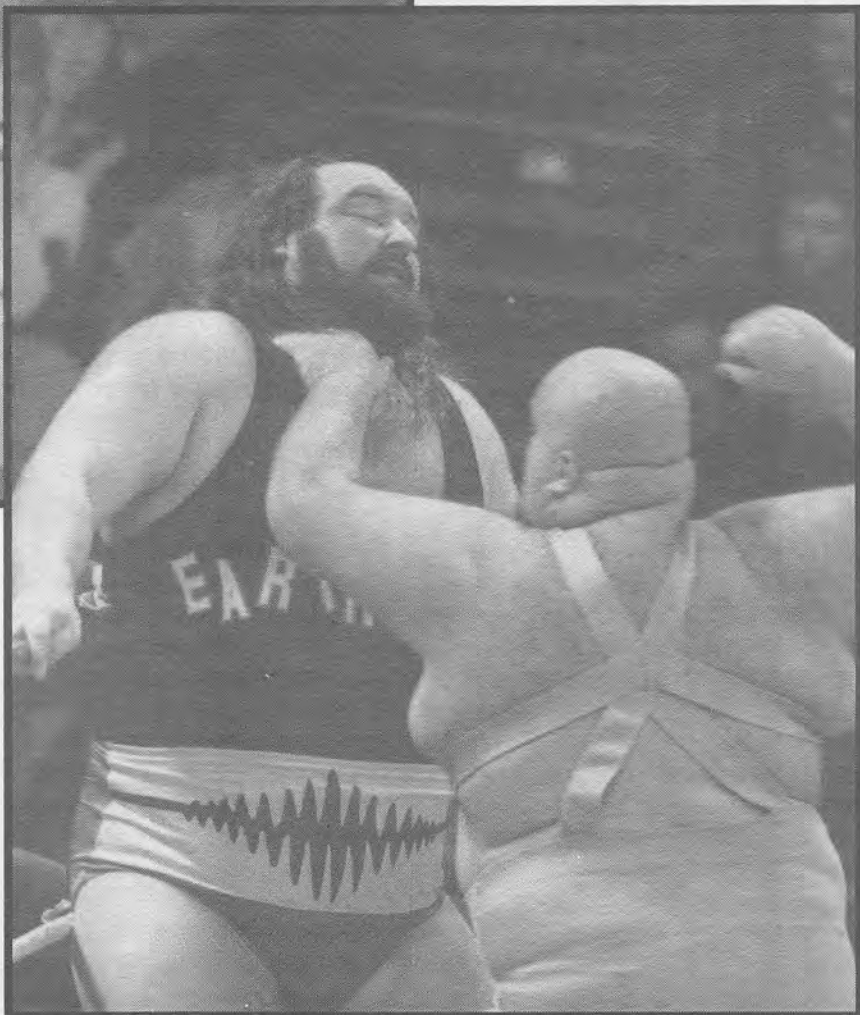
Somehow, the laughter and taunting has drained from the Earthquake/Booger concept. Instead, there is a fight-until-you-drop feud brewing, a feud based on power and pride. A feud with the makings of a war. □

Fans in attendance might have been laughing when the two super heavyweights approached the ring, but not when an angry Booger hit Earthquake with a right to the chin (below) or when 'Quake retaliated with a powerful bodyslam (left). This rivalry has quickly become one of the WWF's best.

such a hard-fought battle.”

If anyone out there can be said to dwarf Earthquake in bulk, that person is Booger. While Earthquake's body is an asset, for Booger, size is his calling card through and through. Booger has thrived throughout his young career on massivity alone. Usually, his incredible weight and inherent strength have been enough to carry him to victory.

But when Booger was soundly defeated by Earthquake in Massachusetts early this year, his pride was wounded and his imagination ignited.



HAS STING BEEN STUNG BY THE ACTING BUG?



Sting may one day have to decide where his future lies: as an up-and-coming action star of TV and films (above), or as an elite professional wrestler (opposite right).

A few measly appearances

on the TV series

Thunder In Paradise

won't turn Sting

into Sir Lawrence Olivier.

But like so many

Californians before him,

the "Stinger" is feeling

the irresistible attraction

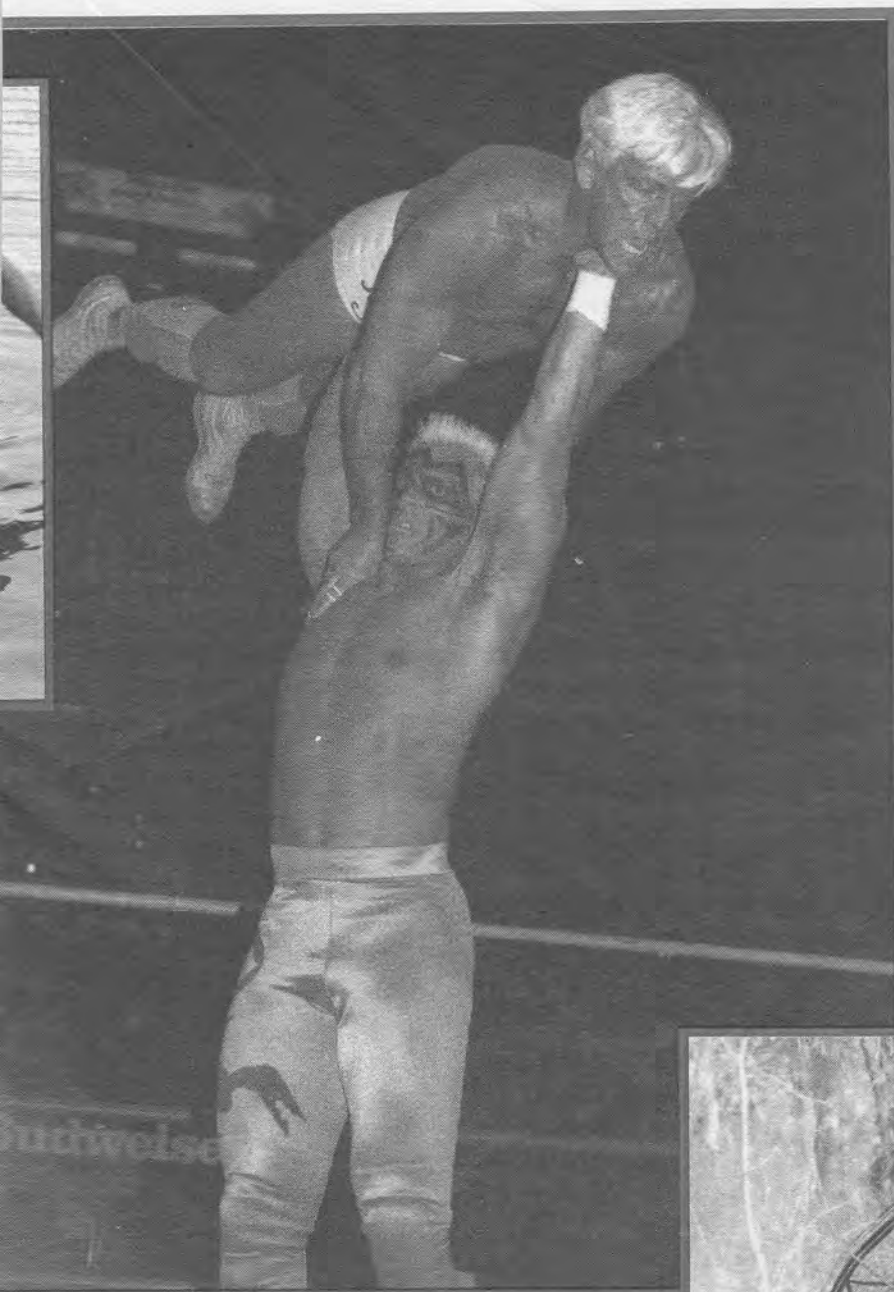
of Hollywood

By Dave Rosenbaum

STING'S WCW FRIENDS pulled an expensive, complicated practical joke on him one day in March. The prank achieved its desired effect of putting Sting in his place and also gave everyone a laugh during a difficult part of the WCW schedule. We'll let Dustin Rhodes tell the story.

"The way it worked was that we had one of Rick Steamboat's friends call up Sting at his house and tell him he was a big Hollywood producer," Rhodes recalled. "Rick's friend told Sting that he was looking for somebody to fill a large role in an upcoming motion picture and he wanted Sting to read for the part at a studio in Atlanta.

"Well, of course Sting said yes.



The second part of the practical joke was for this producer to send a limousine to pick up Sting after a TV taping at the Center Stage.

"On the day that we had it all planned, we could tell that Sting was all good and nervous," Rhodes continued. "You know, he's never been in a movie before, and he thought this was his big chance. The entire afternoon in the locker room, Sting was reading lines from Shakespeare and asking the rest of us to help him out. Well, of course, we played along.

"Finally, the designated hour

arrived and Sting got all dressed up and waited outside for the limo. When it came, Sting climbed inside and found himself surrounded by two beautiful women. Two really peachy blondes. Rick's friend was the driver.

"To make a long story short, he takes Sting to his apartment, which he said was a studio, and hands the Stinger a script. Well, the upshot is that the fourth line of the script has Sting saying, 'The joke's on me. Who did this?' And before he realizes it's a ruse, Rick Steamboat, Brian Pillman, and I come walking through the door. At first he laughed, but you could tell later that he was angry."

Rhodes estimates that the practical joke cost about \$200 for the limo and a few hours in preparation. It was meant to get a few laughs, but it revealed something about Sting.

"I think he's got the acting bug

Sting calls his recent recurring role on *Thunder In Paradise* "a heckuva lot of fun." Ironically, the number-one fan favorite of WCW plays Hulk Hogan's antagonist on the action series.

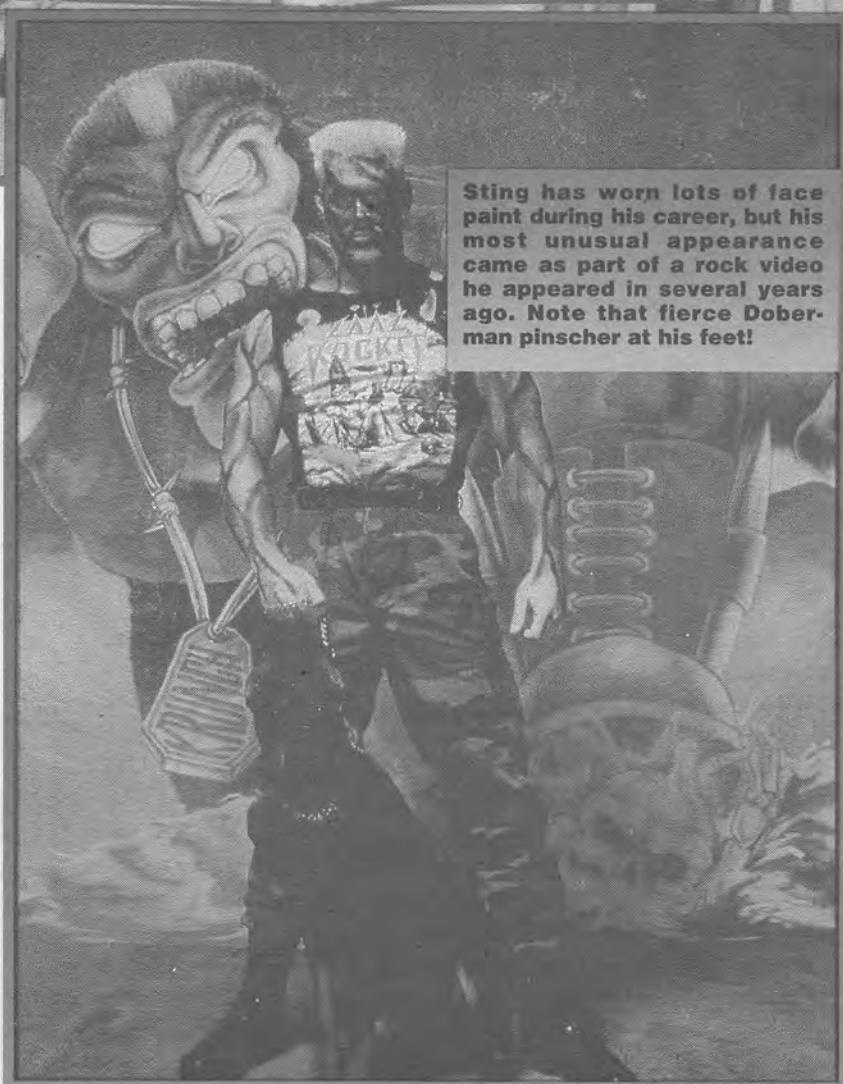




Sting joined Rick Rude and Johnny B. Badd on a recent airing of the talk show *Vicki!* Sting won plaudits for his easygoing manner on that program and on *The Arsenio Hall Show*.

bad," Dustin said. "Now that he's got a taste of Hollywood, he just doesn't want to let it go. I guess I can't blame him. Everyone wants to be a Hollywood star."

You could say that Sting was born with the bug; he's from Venice Beach, California, just down the road a piece from Hollywood. And the bug laid dormant until this year, when Sting started taping episodes of *Thunder In Paradise*, Hulk Hogan's new action-adventure TV show. Although Sting is appearing only in occasional episodes, he has a major guest role as a Navy SEAL-gone-bad-type. The series is filmed in Orlando, Florida, and he recently did some acting there while WCW held TV tapings nearby.



Sting has worn lots of face paint during his career, but his most unusual appearance came as part of a rock video he appeared in several years ago. Note that fierce Doberman pinscher at his feet!

"I love it," Sting said. "It's a heckuva lot of fun and I'm learning a lot about how these things are done. Hulk's been great to work with and the entire experience is something I'll never forget."

Sting balked at the next question: Would he give up wrestling for Hollywood?

"I can't answer that," Sting said. "Nobody's ever made me the offer. The question is too hypothetical to even consider. Nobody wants to turn me into the next William Shatner. This is just a sidelight for now."

For now. Wrestling fans with good memories recall when Hogan appeared as Thunderlips in *Rocky III*. It was a minor role in a major motion picture and got Hogan national attention. The wave of superstardom that suddenly engulfed Hogan forced *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* to declare in a front-page headline: HULK HOGAN

AT THE CROSSROADS: WRESTLING OR HOLLYWOOD?

Hogan chose wrestling. But his friends insist there was no choice; the "Hulkster" received no other movie offers. In reality, Hogan's crossroads all went in the same direction—toward the wrestling ring.

The situation is slightly different for Sting. He got a bit of the acting bug about six years ago when he appeared in the rock video "Laaz Rokit." He is handsome and has far more natural star power than Hogan.

"He has a great personality," said a Hollywood insider. "He made a very good impression with his appearances on *The Arsenio Hall Show* and *Vicki!* He comes across as far more human and likable than Hogan, and that's important. There's evidence that Sting can act. We still haven't seen that with Hogan, certainly not in any of his three motion picture starring roles."

Sting has a choice. He isn't a Johnny-come-lately who suddenly got a big break in the movies. Hogan was a movie star before he was a wrestling star. In fact, *Rocky III* eased Hogan's entrance into the WWF, where Vince McMahon was looking for someone to build the federation around.

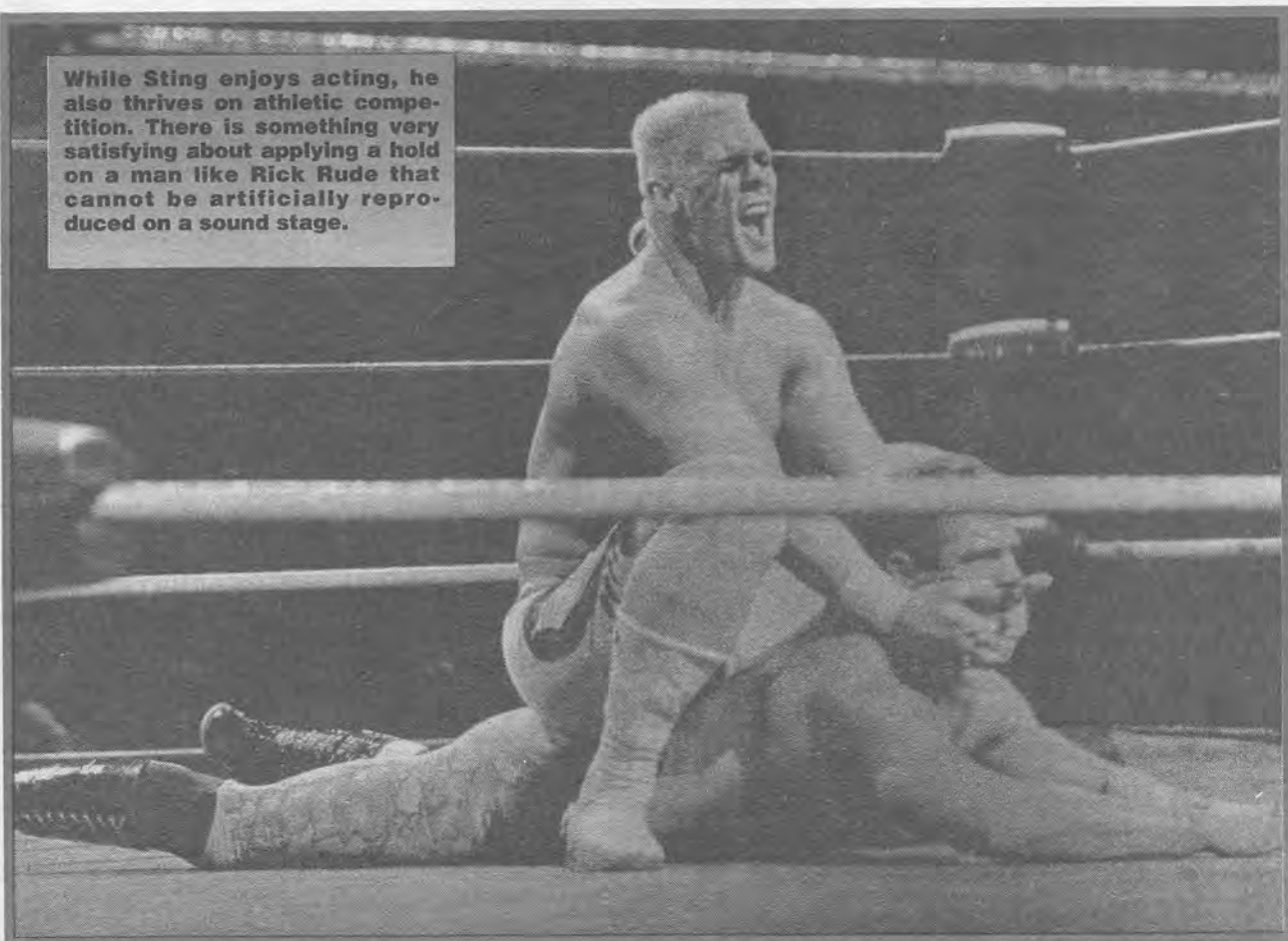
Sting, on the other hand, is already a wrestling star and a three-time former WCW World champion. If Sting wants to pursue a career in acting, plenty of TV and movie producers would be willing to give him a screen test.

A real screen test, not the bogus joke drummed up by Dustin Rhodes and friends.

"They got me good," Sting said with a laugh. "But I'll have the last laugh."

It's hard to guess what that means. Sting, always one with a flair for the dramatic, isn't giving away the plot. □

While Sting enjoys acting, he also thrives on athletic competition. There is something very satisfying about applying a hold on a man like Rick Rude that cannot be artificially reproduced on a sound stage.





BOB ARMSTRONG

"JIM CORNETTE SHOULD BE BANNED FOR LIFE!"

LIKE RIC FLAIR and Terry Funk, Bob Armstrong is one of those wrestlers who seems to get better with age. At 56, he's not only the commissioner of Smoky Mountain Wrestling, but also still wrestles when the situation warrants it.

Armstrong was in his first tenure as SMW commissioner last May when he was brutally attacked by Jim Cornette during a steel cage match. After he recovered from the rib injuries Cornette inflicted upon him, he resigned his post, re-acquired a wrestling license, and sought his revenge.

Armstrong dominated their bouts. Then, in September, Cornette brought in Terry Funk to face "Bullet Bob." Funk won, and a match stipulation allowed Cornette to become commissioner. He was impeached two weeks later. Armstrong also lost a loser-leaves-SMW bout to The Black Ninja, Cornette's charge. Soon, the masked Bullet debuted in SMW. Cornette insisted it was Armstrong.

The situation came to a head on February 13 in Knoxville, Tennessee. Cornette said that if Bullet could beat Funk, which he did, Armstrong could again be commissioner. In addition to his duties as commissioner, Armstrong has been battling Cornette and Dick Murdoch in handicap matches and Cornette alone in cage matches. His SMW contract permits him to wrestle when he wants.

Despite keeping a busy schedule, Armstrong found time to talk to Associate Editor Dave Lenker in

Johnson City, Tennessee. "I was surprised at how relaxed he was, considering all that's going on in Smoky Mountain," reported Lenker. "That federation seems to be in good hands in terms of leadership these days."



Bob Armstrong is happy to again be commissioner of Smoky Mountain Wrestling. He'd be even happier to drive Jim Cornette out of the federation.

Q: First of all, let me congratulate you on becoming Smoky Mountain commissioner again.

A: Thank you. It's been a real strange last few months. Around this time last year, I had no plans to regularly compete anymore. Well, maybe once in a while, if the situation called for it, but not in all these handicap matches and cage matches. The first time I took the

job as commissioner, I thought I could give a new federation like Smoky Mountain the leadership it needed to grow and become a promotion fans and wrestlers could get excited about. I guess that all changed when Cornette stuck his nose in where it didn't belong.

Q: Specifically, what is it about him that gets under your skin?

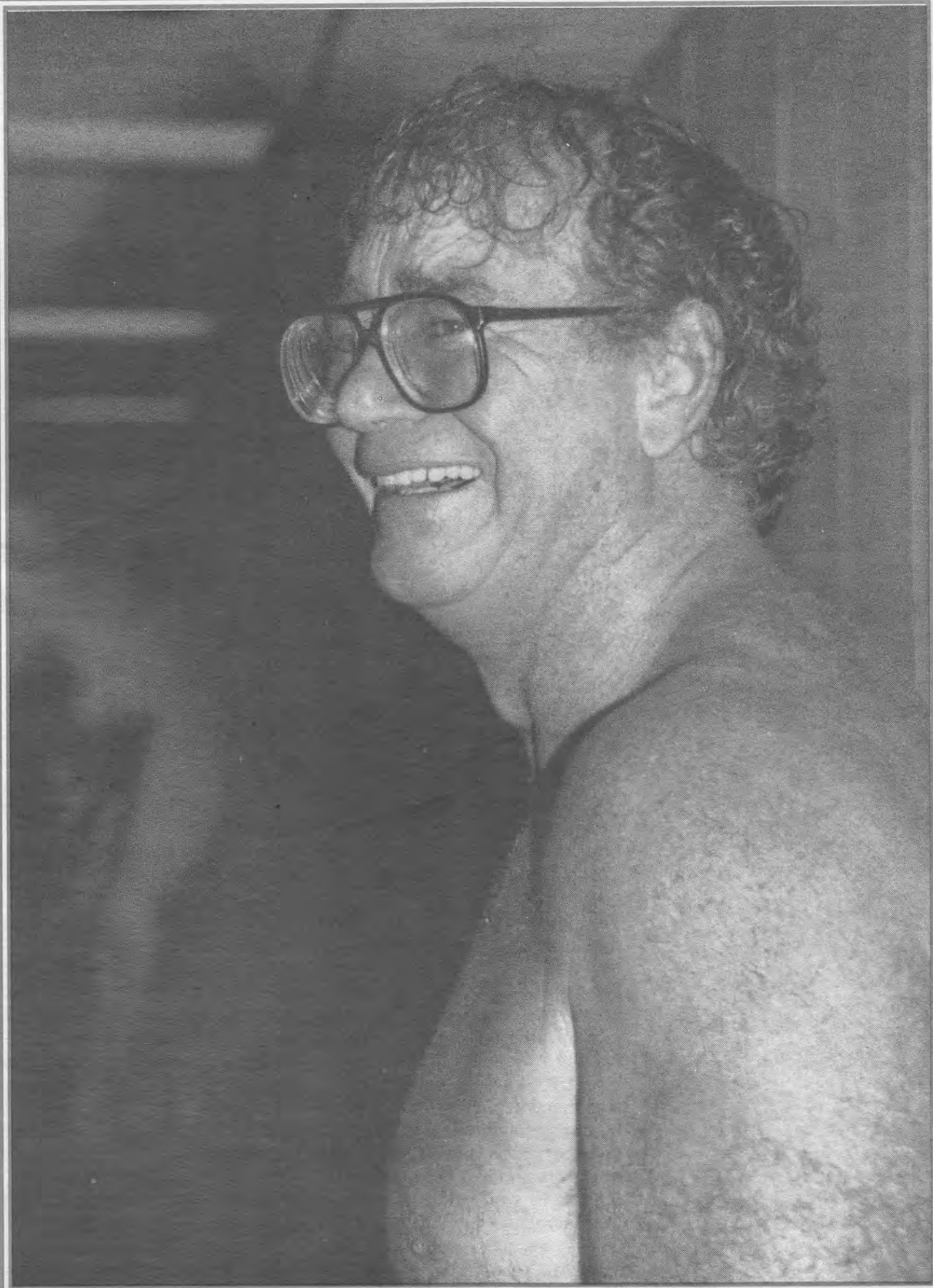
A: (Pauses) I just have a problem with guys like Cornette, guys who've never had real careers as wrestlers but who think they know everything about this sport. If he wants to manage, fine. I have no problem with him helping the careers of his wrestlers. What I can't tolerate is him running around like he knows more than everyone else and interfering in matches and trying to get away with all the stunts he tries to pull. The guy has no guts. He's a coward. Jim Cornette should be banned for life!

Q: As commissioner, are you planning to take any action against him?

A: If he doesn't clean up his act real soon, it's something me and the other Smoky Mountain officials will have to look at very seriously. It all depends on him.

Q: You've been wrestling him and Dick Murdoch a lot lately. What's your take on Cornette the wrestler?

A: He's not a wrestler. It's that simple. He puts on wrestling gear and dances around the ring like he's a wrestler, but he's no athlete. He's an out-of-shape coward, a joke,



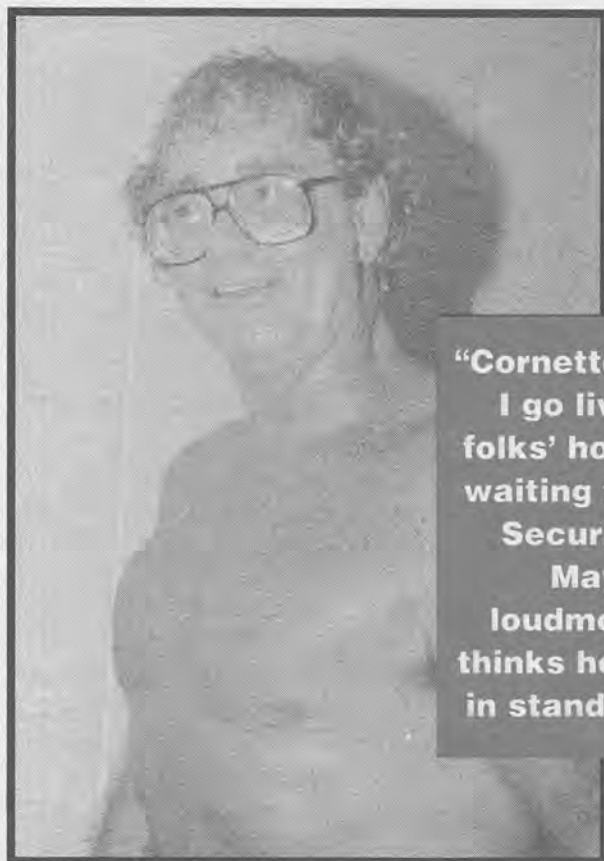
and an embarrassment. Having him in the ring puts the handicap on Murdoch, not me (Laughs).

Q: Some people say you should either be a commissioner or a wrestler, but not both. How do you respond to this criticism? Is it a conflict of interest for you to be wrestling a man you might have to make a ruling on later?

A: I can see why some folks might see it that way. I don't look at it that way at all. Ask the people who have known me all my life, and they'll all tell you I'm an honest man. I'm true to my word and I'll tell you right now that I take this responsibility of being Smoky Mountain commissioner very seriously.

Q: How much longer do you plan to wrestle in matches like these? I'm not going to argue with the success you've had, but ...

A: Yeah, I know I'm not as young as I used to be. I've heard a lot of people say I'm old and washed up. Cornette's suggested I go live in an old folks' home and start waiting for my Social Security checks. (Laughs) Maybe that loudmouthed



"Cornette's suggested I go live in an old folks' home and start waiting for my Social Security checks. Maybe that loudmouthed idiot thinks he has a future in stand-up comedy."

idiot thinks he has a future in stand-up comedy. I'm young enough to kick the tar out of him.

Q: And you've shown it.

A: True. Seriously, though, I don't plan on keeping as active a wrestling schedule as I have these last few months. I've shown Cornette and Murdoch I can still wrestle and I don't expect 'em to challenge me too many more times. Let me warn anyone who might be thinking of crossing me: I've got plenty of fight left in my body. I work out as much as I can in what little spare time I have. I can be a wrestler and a commissioner if I have to. Now that I've said that, I can tell you that I hope it doesn't come to that too often. I need to spend more time in the office these days, especially now that we're expanding into areas like Georgia.

Q: Let's talk about your role as commissioner. You've promised the fans that now that you're back, you'll make

Smoky Mountain more of a fans' promotion. Could you elaborate on that?

A: Sure. What I meant was things are going to be run a little more along the straight-and-narrow now that I have a say. We talked about how Cornette and all his men think they're in charge down here. Well, to be honest with you, he's not the only one. Look at Brian Lee's latest title reign. You know as well as I do that he hardly won any of his matches without Tammy Fytch interfering. I've had problems with her since last summer when she told me that she would be a better commissioner than me. As far as I'm concerned, hiding behind a manager is just cowardly. If a champion can't keep his title by wrestling by the rules, then he's not worth a damn in my book. Well, we've got a new heavyweight champion now in "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony. You better believe I've been keeping a close eye on him.



Armstrong has no objection to Cornette's managing of wrestlers. But he can't stand his know-it-all attitude and his constant interference in matches.

Q: Anthony won the title the same day you got the commissioner job back. In fact, he did it in a Tennessee chain match when Ron Wright kicked Lee with a loaded boot. Are you in favor of using specialty matches to decide titles?

A: Smoky Mountain has a reputation for being one of the toughest federations around. I think if both wrestlers agree to it, and if we feel they aren't putting themselves in any serious danger, then it's okay. Sometimes it's better to let two guys as tough as Anthony and Lee try to settle their feud once and for all in a match like that. As for the interference, you have to be a little more lenient in a match as wild as a chain match. I don't approve of interference, though. If it becomes a trend with Anthony—and he has a long history of rulebreaking—I won't hesitate to take action against him.

Q: Do you have any specific changes you'd like to make?

A: We talk about changes in meetings all the time. Unfortunately, I'm not permitted to discuss much of what we've talked about just yet. I do plan to take an active role in what goes on around here, though.

Q: Three of your sons, Brian, Scott, and Steve, wrestle a lot in SMW. You could be accused of showing them preferential treatment ...

A: Yes, I know I could. But my sons know I don't play favorites with anyone. I never have—even when they were kids. If they get out of line, I'll let them know about it. I have a reputation to protect. If I help them and give somebody else a raw deal, I won't have my job very long. Trust me, it won't be a problem. I had a long talk with the three of them, and they understand where I'm coming from. They just want to be treated like everyone else.

Q: What's your take on the Smoky Mountain-WWF talent exchange? You just had a major card in Marietta, Georgia, where Lex Luger, The Kid, Irwin R. Schyster, and Owen Hart

competed. Can we look forward to more of that in the future?

A: I hope so. Everybody knows about The Heavenly Bodies and The Rock 'n' Roll Express being in the WWF now and then, but I'd like to see guys like Lee, Anthony, Tracey Smothers, and Chris Can-



Armstrong says he does not intend to alter Smoky Mountain's tradition of holding tough specialty matches. However, he adds he won't let rulebreakers run amok.

dido get their chance. They're all fine wrestlers. Maybe we don't get as much TV exposure as WWF guys get, but I'd love to put our top men up against theirs and see what happens. I think the results might surprise a few people. Will it happen? I don't know at this point, but anything's possible. And I'd also like to see more big names from the WWF appear on our cards when they can work it into their schedule. As a wrestler myself, I know that sometimes you get in a rut when you meet the same opponents over and over again. It's always good to face new blood.



Armstrong (absorbing a Cornette punch) sees no conflict of interest in administering and wrestling simultaneously. He does plan to cut down on his wrestling so he can concentrate on continuing SMW's growth.

Q: I have to ask you the question that people have been asking for months. Was it you under The Bullet's mask?

A: (Smiles) That old Bullet is a real good friend of mine. He's always been someone I could count on. Seems like I've known him all my life, but I have a feeling you won't see him around anymore. I hope I don't need his help again. I should have never been forced out of this area last year when Cornette brought that Black Ninja in, so who better to help me out than the old Bullet? He was never unmasked, so I guess you'll never find out who he was. □

SINGLED OUT

WHY WON'T PROMOTERS GIVE HAWK A BREAK?

One of the finest tag team wrestlers of our time, Hawk wants to establish himself as an individual talent. Yet cautious, money-conscious promoters stand in his way



Photos by Jason Ross Lavin

FOR FAILURE:

By Kostya Kennedy

Hawk is earning his wings as a solo wrestler, beating quality opponents like Mr. Hughes (left). But promoters are bringing him back to Earth by only perceiving him as Animal's famed tag team partner (below).



Hawk has been an intimidating and resilient wrestler for years. He has withstood a lot of punishment in bouts against Hughes, but he won't be able to prove himself as a solo until he's consistently matched with tough opponents.

THIS IS A description of the red-tailed hawk that soars above the land throughout North America:

It is a powerful, aggressive, and thickset bird, an opportunistic hunter. It will fly in a variety of habitats and prey on anything from rabbits to lizards to snakes. It can hunt either on the wing or from a perch, and usually nabs its prey.

If anyone ever wondered how Hawk the wrestler, Road Warrior Hawk to be exact, got his name, that mystery should now be solved. A powerful, aggressive hunter? Yes, indeed.

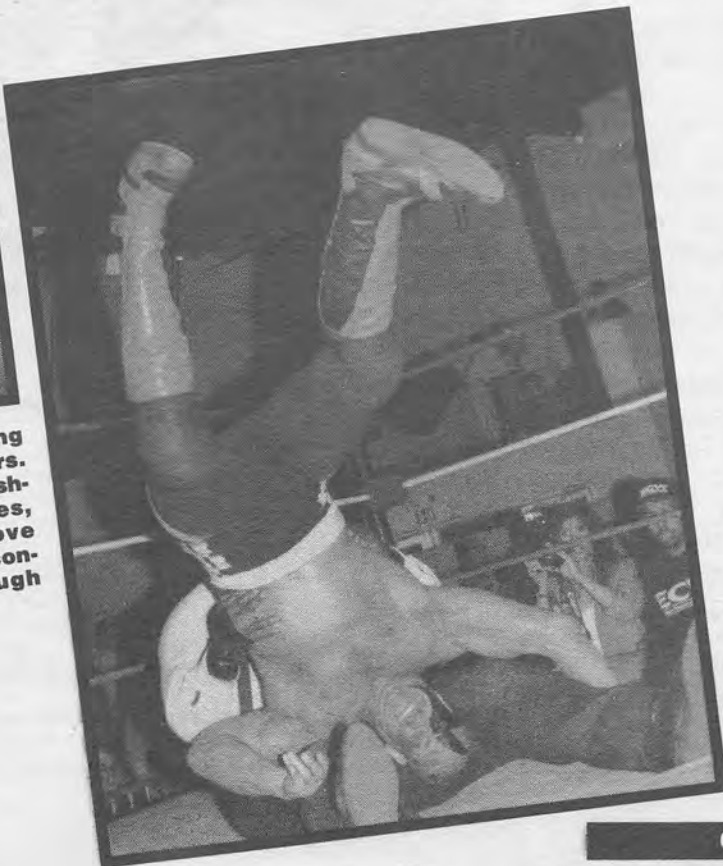
There is more to the description of the proud species of bird. They stay close together in

pairs, help one another feed. The parents of baby hawks share the month-long period of incubation. They do it together, as equals.

Then is it any wonder that our own Hawk (and "our" refers to all of us who hold wrestling dear) has made his fame in tag teams, as half of a two-part whole. Is it any surprise that the human side of Hawk—the man with fingers as powerful as the talons of any bird—strives to break free of his namesake?

Or is it any wonder, knowing promoters as we do, that Hawk is having the fight of his life breaking from his illustrious past and forging a new identity.

"Promoters like to go with what's been successful in the



past," said one wrestling insider. "It's like, 'Why change a good thing?' You see the same kind of attitude in boxing. And even outside of sports, look at all the sequels you see in movies. Or all the actors you see cast in the same role time after time. Promoters in any field like to go for what they know they can count on, something they feel comfortable with."

What they've been able to count on with Hawk is one of the finest tag team wrestlers in history. In both The Road Warriors (with Animal) and The Hell Raisers (with Kensuke Sasaki), Hawk was a fearsome, awesome power to reckon with. He complemented his partner, and vice versa. Hawk can make a partner thrive beyond the sum of their parts.

But now, Road Warrior Hawk, among those counted on to bolster ECW and help the World Wrestling Network get off the ground, wants his own identity. He wants to show that he can go it alone, and be successful that way too.

But wrestling promoters are gun-shy. They've yet to give Hawk good matches on a consistent basis. It seems they've decided that he can't be a top singles wrestler because he hasn't shown it in the past. From all the signs, it appears they've singled him out for failure.

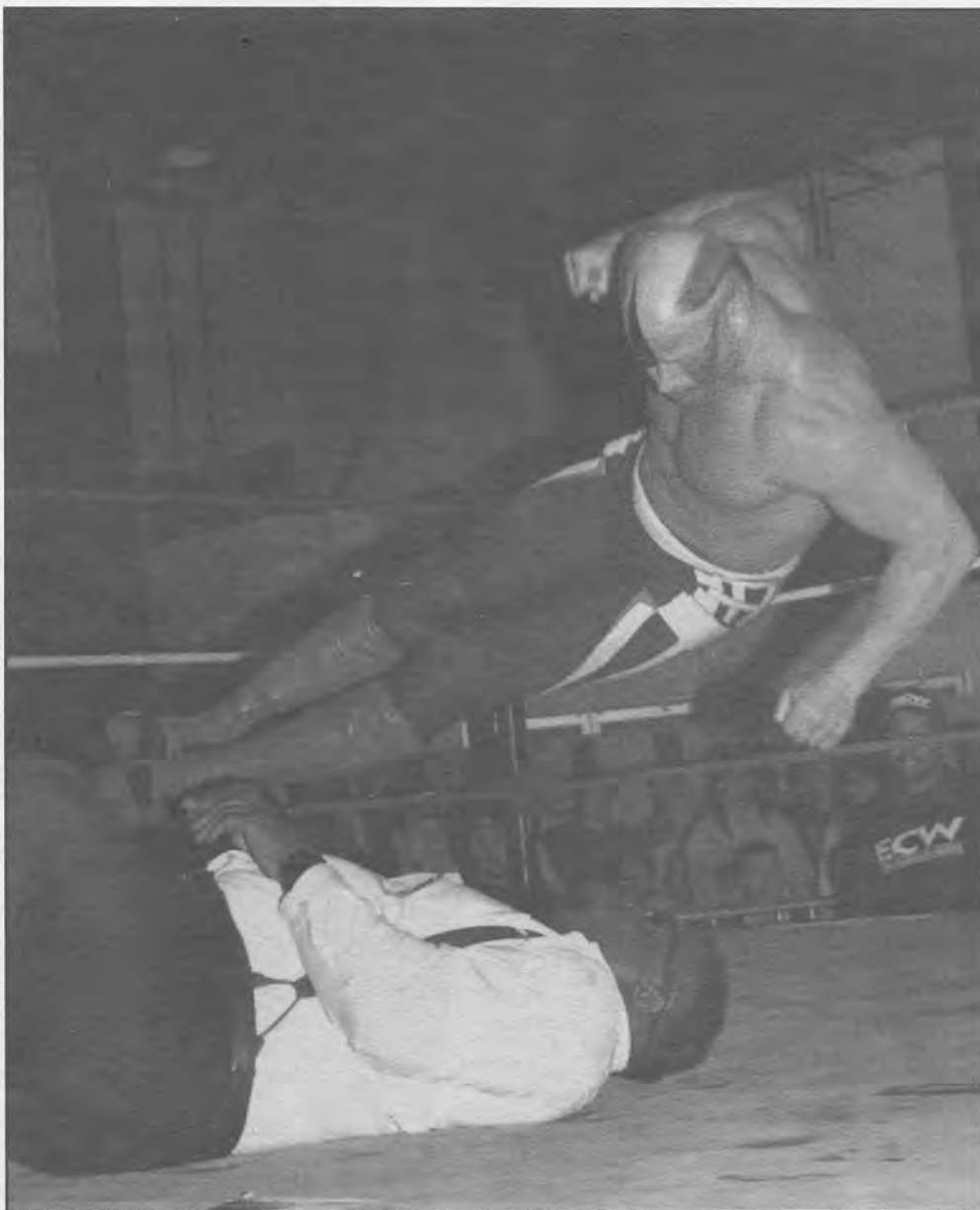
"Frankly, I think it's ridiculous," said one promoter who spoke on

condition of anonymity. "I'm all for giving Hawk the opportunity. He's given so much to the sport. He deserves to get this back.

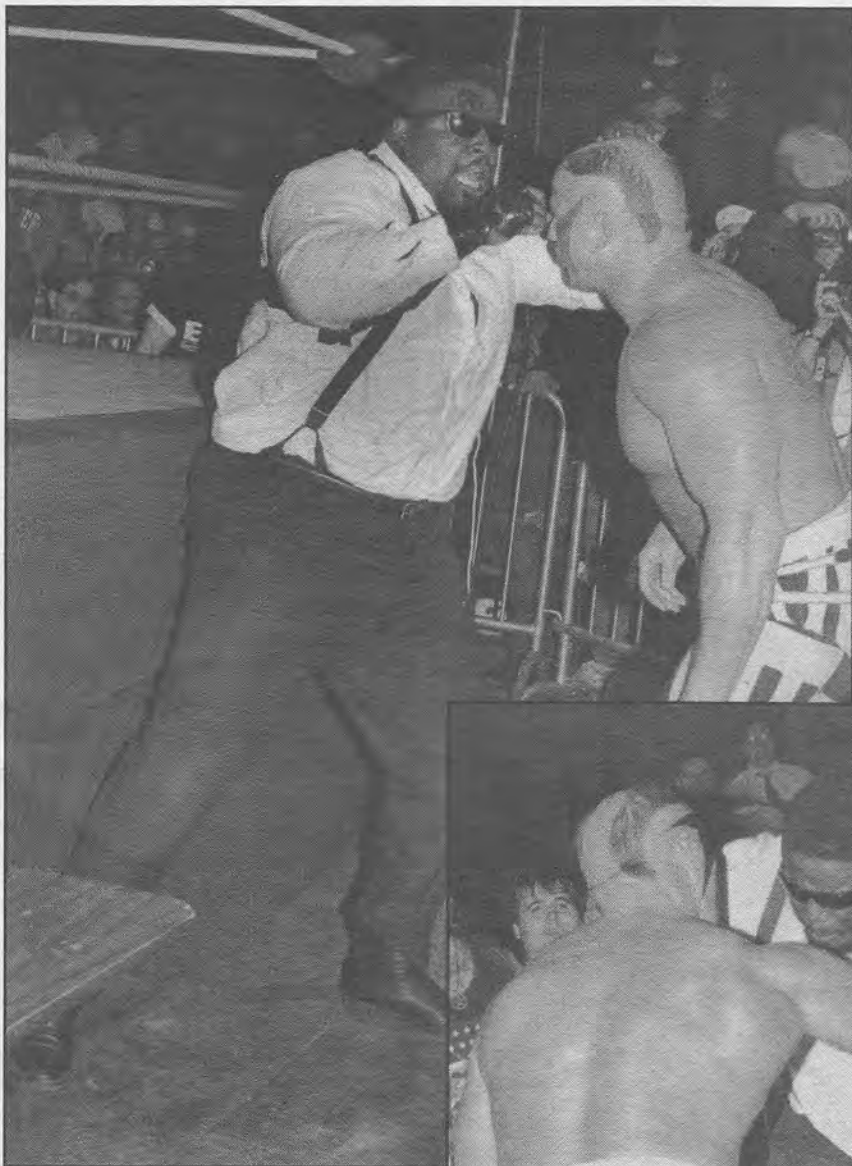
"But right now, I'm fighting a lonely battle. It's as if the guys want him to get frustrated as a singles wrestler so that he'll go back to tag teaming. I think that deep down most promoters want him to fail. They don't want to upset the apple cart, and the motive for that is little more than greed."

Even if Hawk were to get some good singles matches thrown his way, he would have plenty to prove. By beating men like the formidable Mr. Hughes, Hawk has shown that he does have the basic skills to be a solid individual wrestler. Whether he can rise to the top in that capacity remains to be answered.

"Singles wrestling and tag team wrestling are completely different arts," said the great Ric Flair in a



Hawk fistdrops Mr. Hughes during ECW action. One promoter contends many of his brethren, more comfortable with the tried-and-true, want Hawk to fail at singles so he'll return to his better-known status as a tag team wrestler.



One thing, however, is certain. With his background of success, his pure physical ability, and his dedication to his work, Hawk deserves the chance to try. If he goes into the ring against fine singles talent and can't hold his own, the wrestling world will know it. Perhaps, however, he'll go into that same ring, and come out flying. Alone. □

Hawk may consider Mr. Hughes to be a tough opponent, but he's nothing compared to some of the wrestling promoters. The best he can do is keep winning and hope to force the hand of those who are trying to hold him back.



recent state-of-wrestling address. "You're much freer on your own. It can make wrestling easier for the right person, but it can be very difficult for others. Not everyone who can win in a tag team can win individually, and vice versa."

With promoters largely against him and with fans basically unaware or at least unconcerned with Hawk's progress as a singles wrestler, it's clear that Hawk is flying into a difficult climate. Flair's words are well-spoken, and no one can say whether Hawk will or will not reach the individual heights that he reached as half of a pair.

DIESEL POWER

Tracking The Giant's Turbulent Career

Depending on whom one talks to, Diesel is either a superstar-to-be or a gigantic bust. Yet all agree that 1994 will be an important year for the big man. What he does in upcoming months may determine the direction of his career

By Andy Rodriguez

DIESEL COULD GIVE his fans and detractors a pretty good view of where he thinks his career stands right now. He could, but he won't.

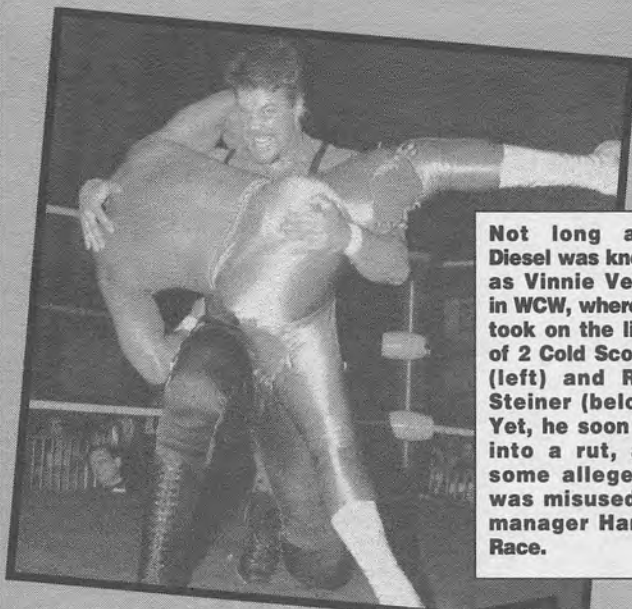
"It isn't Diesel's game to let anyone know what he's really thinking," said a good friend. "He keeps his own counsel."

Diesel may keep certain opinions to himself, but few others are shy about expressing an opinion

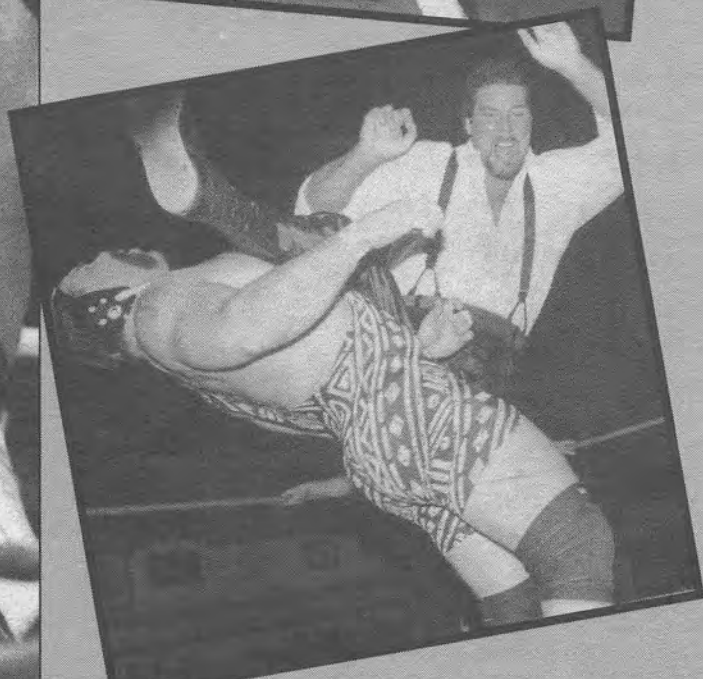
about the seven-footer. There is much interest in this man who has spent most of the past year merely as a bodyguard.

Most of the talk centers around potential. Most agree that Diesel is a true up-and-comer, that he

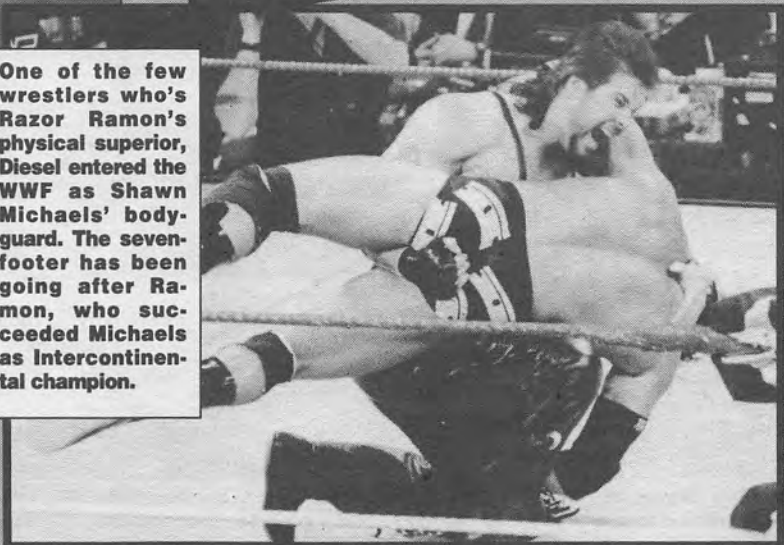




Not long ago, Diesel was known as Vinnie Vegas in WCW, where he took on the likes of 2 Cold Scorpio (left) and Rick Steiner (below). Yet, he soon fell into a rut, and some allege he was misused by manager Harley Race.

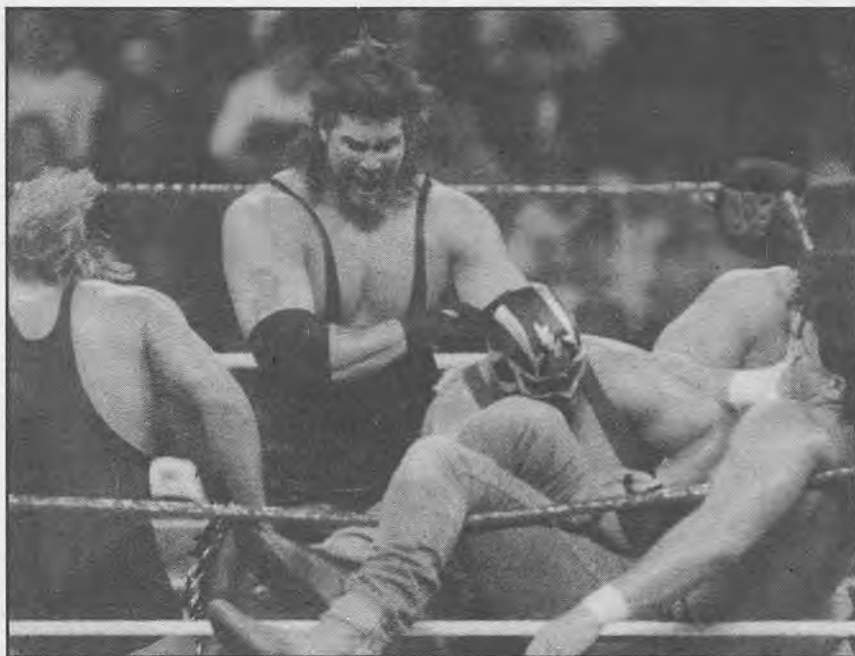


One of the few wrestlers who's Razor Ramon's physical superior, Diesel entered the WWF as Shawn Michaels' bodyguard. The seven-footer has been going after Ramon, who succeeded Michaels as Intercontinental champion.

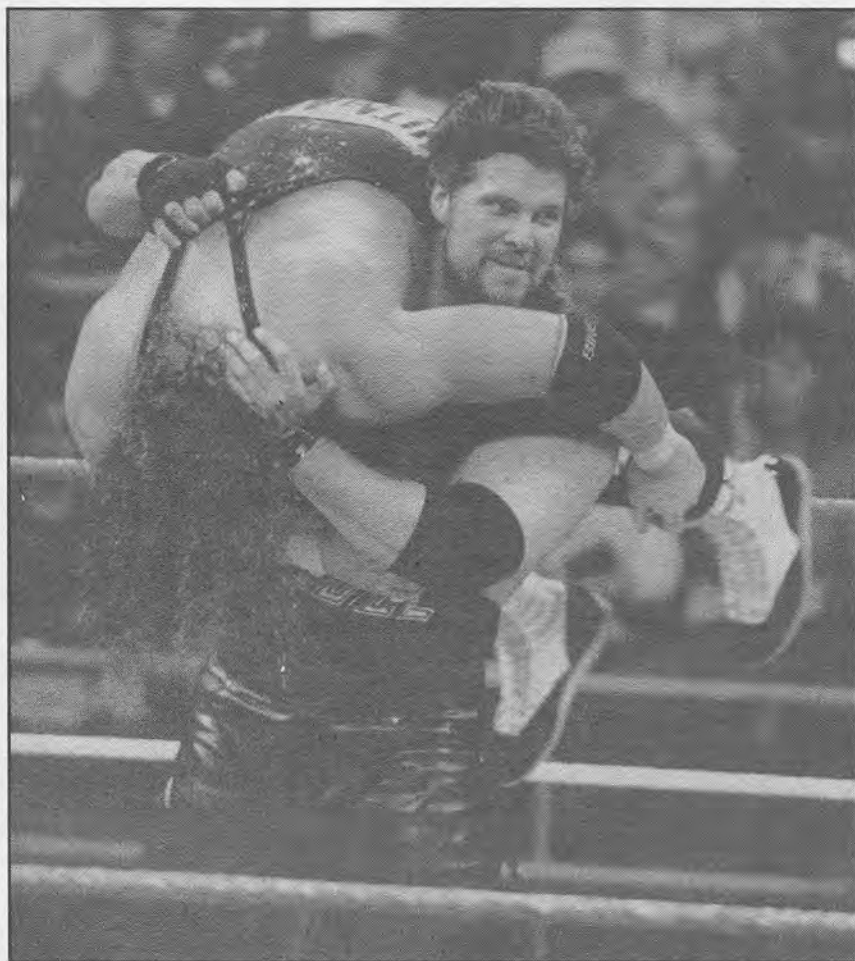


could easily be a top contender to any WWF title. Some even are convinced he will be the next World champion.

The speculation became more intense following Diesel's masterful performance in the Royal



While Diesel didn't win the Royal Rumble, it turned out to be his coming-of-age in the WWF. He threw out seven rivals in a row to establish himself as a legitimate title threat.



Diesel is firmly in control of Bret Hart, but one wonders whether Diesel has similar control over his destiny. He's had to subordinate his talent to Michaels' needs. When will Diesel declare his independence?

Rumble. He didn't win the event, but he singlehandedly eliminated seven men in a row. When he was himself ousted, it took three men—big men—to shove him over the top rope.

After the Rumble, it became easier to regard Diesel as a future champion. However, there have been other times in his career when he has performed well, and then not met expectations.

Before he entered the WWF, Diesel competed in WCW, where he was known as Vinnie Vegas. In his initial outings there, Vegas looked extremely impressive, using his seven feet to full advantage and displaying a fair amount of wrestling skill. As a member of Harley Race's stable, Vegas was expected to receive quality opposition and, eventually, his share of title opportunities.

That isn't what happened. Instead of taking the fast track to glory, Vegas got bogged down in meaningless feuds. Title shots were rare, and when they did come he never appeared to be at his best. Unable to break out of the rut, Vegas left WCW for the WWF.

"He should have really dominated here," said one WCW competitor. "His downfall, I think, was that he was too concerned with his image. He always had to be 'Vinnie Vegas, tough guy.' He was always into trying to intimidate his opponent instead of outwrestling him."

"I think Race just flat-out blew it with Vegas," offered one former managerial colleague, Johnny Valiant. "Completely misused the guy. Instead of sending him after the big dogs, he put him in tag team matches with Big Van Vader. Harley's done a great job with Vader, but he could have done a lot more with Vegas."

Regardless of who was at fault, Vegas was determined to fare better in the WWF. Instead of arriving as a wrestler, though, he made his debut as Diesel, bodyguard to Intercontinental champion Shawn Michaels. It was a decision that surprised even those who know Diesel well.

"I couldn't understand it," said one friend. "The name change was no big deal, because that happens all the time. But I never thought he'd want to play second banana to someone like Michaels. I asked him about it, and he said it was part of his plan."

If that plan was a design to get Diesel to the WWF World title, it initially appeared to be poorly thought out. Though he occasionally tagged up with Michaels, his main assignment was running interference for the "Boy Toy." Making Michaels look good took precedent over Diesel's own career as a wrestler.

Through it all, those wrestlers close to Diesel reminded onlookers that Diesel saw the work for Michaels as a necessary step toward the top.

"The public's view," said one, "was of a potentially great wrestler wasting his time. But Diesel wasn't wasting time, he was biding it. He knew that with patience, his chance would come. And no matter what you think of Michaels personally, the guy's an accomplished wrestler. Anyone can improve their technical skills just by hanging around and learning from him."

After disappointing performances against Tatanka and I-C champion Razor Ramon, Diesel received that chance at the Royal Rumble. His magnificent accomplishment renewed the feeling among his supporters that he is a championship contender.



Diesel has shown he can choke and dominate the likes of Hart. Now he needs to take care of his own future, and eventually pursue either the World or I-C title. Don't be surprised if it happens soon.

"He can't be ignored any longer," said Jesse Nordstrom of Wilmington, Delaware, president of a Diesel fan club. "After the Rumble, nobody should have any doubts about his ability. He proved he's more than ready to take on all the WWF's best. Yokozuna, Lex Luger, Bret Hart, all of them. He definitely deserves that chance."

Indeed, it finally may be Diesel's time to shine. However, there still is a significant obstacle: Michaels. Although Diesel appears ready to break ties with his employer, Michaels reportedly is not prepared to let Diesel go with a simple goodbye.

"Shawn knows he's got a good thing going with Diesel," one of Michaels' confidants related. "Look at him; he's the ultimate bodyguard. Shawn wants that belt

again and he wants Diesel to get him there. Whatever it takes, Shawn is going to keep Diesel around."

Despite the turbulence, it is evident that Diesel's career is on the upswing. He most likely will split with Michaels and establish himself in singles competition. And if he takes another dive, his doubters will pounce on him and insist he'll never be anything but a loser.

"There comes a time when potential has to be translated into performance," said one old WCW foe. "The Rumble was a start, but if Diesel doesn't keep it going, no one will ever take him seriously, no matter how big he is."

A seven-footer not taken seriously? As Vinnie Vegas might have said:

Don't bet on it!

□

The telephone wires sizzle each month, as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. Here's the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to feel the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One On One

NAME YOUR RIVALRY: *Giants-Dodgers, Bears-Packers, Rangers-Islanders, Texas A&M-Texas. Battles fought intensely, regardless of the standings in that day's paper. Wrestling's equivalent of those feuds is now living its latest chapter in Memphis, as local legend Jerry Lawler takes on a man he truly despises, Eddie Gilbert.*

What makes this mat rivalry one of a kind? Each man will go to any length to humiliate the other, and we mean *any*. Several years ago, Gilbert nearly ran over Lawler with his car. Recently, Lawler won a minivan belonging to Eddie's mother as part of a match stipulation, but Gilbert wouldn't give him the satisfaction of driving it—so he threw a fire extinguisher into the windshield. Had the Memphis monarch not shielded his face with his crown, he might have suffered a serious injury.

Lawler's been involved in shenanigans, too. After losing to Gilbert recently, he was ordered to surrender his crown. He went back to the locker room and returned with a miniature version.

To paraphrase a popular ad campaign, can *your* rivalry do this?

Negotiations for a phone hook-up were not as delicate as one might think. Lawler and Gilbert are veterans, both familiar with how the media work, and both were eager to get in their two cents—and one-up the other. Who won the argument? You decide, as Lawler and Gilbert go ... "One On One."

ONE



"Memphis people are the most knowledgeable, discriminating, involved wrestling fans on the face of the Earth."

—Jerry Lawler

JERRY LAWLER: Good news for your mother, Gilbert. I just sent her a map and guide for the Memphis bus system. Now that she doesn't have the van, the poor lady needs to get around. I beat you fair and square and you agreed to give me the van if I did that. But you had to go and smash the window with a fire extinguisher. You're so mature. You handled that situation like a real man. When are you going to grow up?

EDDIE GILBERT: I'm more of a man than you could ever be, Lawler. The best news my mother could get would be word that you're leaving wrestling for good. You'd be doing the whole world a favor.

JL: Until I embarrass you once and for all, that's only a pipe dream. By the

way, how'd you like that little crown I gave you? Is it true you've donated it to the incredible shrinking man?

EG: You're real funny, pseudo-king. All I know is that I'm the best wrestler the USWA has ever seen. I'm the real king of Memphis ... a real legend. You are not. Case closed.

JL: I'll give you credit, Gilbert. You're a real tough opponent, but you're no legend. The people of Memphis love me and I love them. I've earned my place in wrestling history. I deserve to wear the crown. I deserve to be called "The King." I've heard people call you a lot of names, but I won't repeat any of them right now. I will tell you that they're not too flattering.

EG: Shine on, harvest buffoon,

NONE



**"Just a mass illusion, Lawler. The pablum you've spooned out for years has affected their psyches."
—Eddie Gilbert**

shine on.

JL: You know I'm the best. You hear the crowds roar for me, Gilbert. You hear them boo you. Memphis people are the most knowledgeable, discriminating, involved wrestling fans on the face of the Earth.

EG: Just a mass illusion, Lawler. The pablum you've spooned out for years has affected their psyches.

JL: Why did you decide to come back here and try to torture me? There must've been other places you could have chosen to raise your special kind of havoc. Maybe you couldn't find a town where people could stand the sight of you, so you crawled out from under your rock and came here.

EG: I get pleasure out of torturing

you, Lawler. Take it as a compliment!

JL: I don't take *anything* from you without examining it first.

EG: That's right. It was wonderful handcuffing you to the ropes and getting help from Terry Funk and Tommy Rich to beat you senseless at "Memphis Memories." I asked you who the best of Memphis was, and you didn't answer. Admit it—the truth hurts! Deep down, you know I'm the best wrestler you've ever faced. You know you're not in my class. But you had to save face and stand up for yourself in front of those idiots there at the Mid-South Coliseum who were cheering for you. Boy, you really have those people suckered into thinking you're a great wrestler.

JL: Unlike yourself, they know the truth. I owe my thanks to Austin Idol and Brian Christopher for coming out of the dressing room and saving me from one of your cowardly attacks. And remember, I pinned you to end that 10-man tag elimination match that night, so you should know who the best of Memphis is.

EG: That's right, get help from all your do-gooder pals. I don't know how you managed to get that Brian Christopher to come over to your side, but I guess I should give you credit. He really seems to think you're his friend. I know better. I'm know you're just using the kid as a shield. You think maybe I'll go after him and leave you alone. I tell you what, me and my brother, Doug, will be glad to put both of you in the hospital.

JL: I can't think of a better man to have in my corner than Brian. I could remind you that you once feuded with your own brother ...

EG: That's ancient history. I'm surprised a fool like you can remember that far back. Let's get back to the present, Lawler. I still say that van is mine.

JL: Well you're not getting it back! As I already told you, I won it fair and square. But knowing you, if you did reclaim it, you wouldn't pay a penny to fix the windshield. You'd probably make your poor mother pay for it. She must cry herself to sleep every night knowing how you and Doug turned out.

EG: (*Laughs*) Right. Looking back, I'm sorry I didn't blow up the van before you ever got to it. Could've used the fire extinguisher to put out the fire. Listen, Lawler, if you haven't gotten the idea already, you should know that you're never gonna get anything of mine. You're so stupid that you keep putting your prized possessions on the line every time we wrestle. I'll take your rings, your crown, your jacket, whatever you want. By the time I'm through, you'll be on skid row.

JL: Wrong! I am "The King." I will never be dethroned. □

Ron Simmons

(Continued from page 49)

and it certainly doesn't excuse some of the things he's doing."

Then Boss, who has vowed to set WCW rulebreakers back on the straight and narrow, employed some terms from his legal vocabulary. "Simmons is not incorrigible," he said. "We know he can rehabilitated because he has been an honest wrestler in the past. I believe that if I levy the proper punishment, it will be corrective. For now you could say that Ron Simmons is being incarcerated by The Boss. A little more work, and soon I could see him being out on parole."

Simmons' case is not one of rule-breaking for random pleasure, nor is it due to a deranged mind. He's never been perceived as being driven to torture foes, unlike Big Van Vader and his ilk.

Instead, Simmons is one of the most

success-driven wrestlers in the federation and his current, cheating ways seem to have only one design: to get the title. Simmons feels he's been treated unfairly by WCW, that he was never given a chance to regain his status of a year ago. Now he's taken matters into his own treacherous hands.

"When I spoke to him not long ago I could tell he was ready to snap," said Sting, who has known Simmons throughout his career. "The guy is title-hungry like you wouldn't believe. Most guys have their own set of personal guidelines that they stick to, even if they are sometimes of questionable morals. I don't think Simmons has that. I think he just wants a belt around his waist and morals—good or bad—be damned."

The belt is indeed what drives Simmons, but lately there has been a

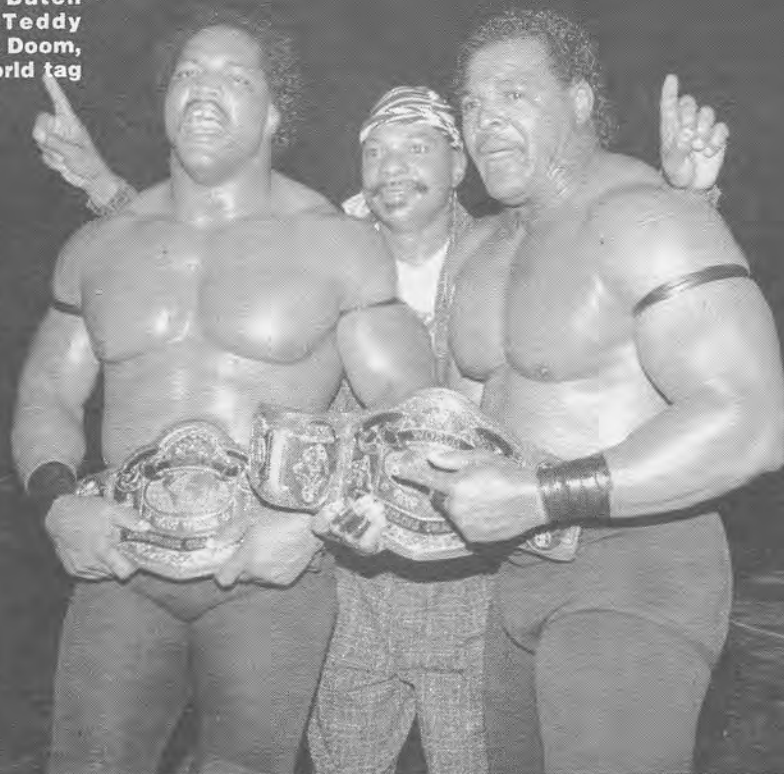
pride factor as well. He doesn't like looking up at Boss in the WCW ratings. He doesn't like the idea that a lot of people think Boss can outwrestle him, though he concedes Boss was a successful star as Big Bossman in the WWF.

"His best days are past, face it. It's such a joke," Simmons said. "He's not even close to the wrestler I am. I can beat that guy so easily, it's silly. I'm stronger than he is, I'm faster than he is, and I sure am smarter than he is. Where does he get off calling himself The Boss anyway. He ain't bossin' me. No way. No how."

Ron Simmons is a man with an attitude and tactics that most good Americans abhor. But there's one thing he has in common with a lot of the U.S. public.

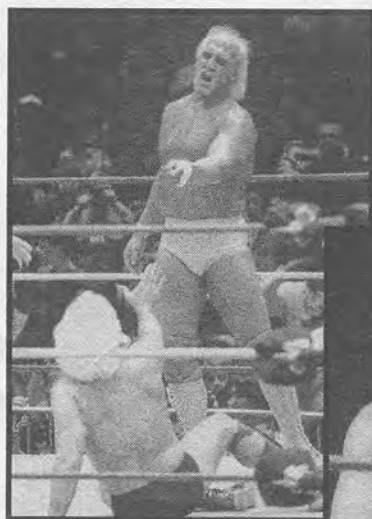
He doesn't like the boss. □

This isn't the first time Simmons has been a rulebreaker. He teamed with Butch Reed and manager Teddy Long in 1990, and as Doom, they won the NWA World tag team title.



This Month In...

THE Wrestler



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We preview the
inevitable battle

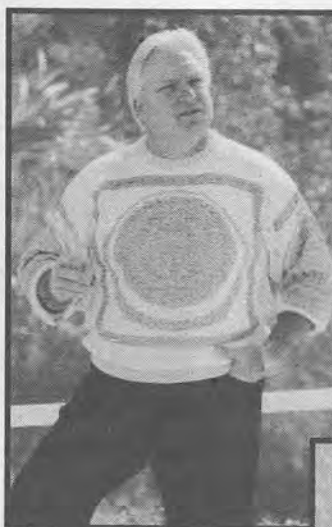


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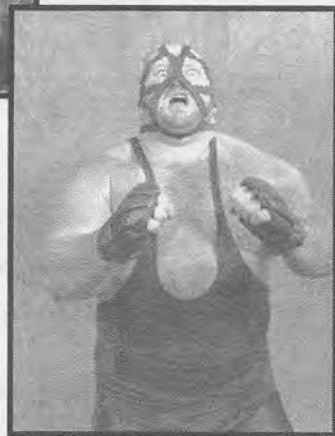
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Sincerely Yours

(Continued from page 5)



Independent wrestlers like Italian Stallion deserve consideration for ranking in *Inside Wrestling's* Top 15, in the opinion of reader Stan R. Lenkiewicz. He cites Stallion's dominance of the PWF as proof.

some of these champions, like the PWF's Italian Stallion or GWF's Iceman Parsons, have held their titles for lengthy periods of time. Are you saying Rick Rude's title is not the only worthless championship in wrestling?

STAN R. LENKIEWICZ
Paramus, NJ

PERFECTLY CURT

It's good to see that Bobby Heenan didn't take a complete vacation from wrestling between his time at the WWF and WCW ("How Curt Hennig Can Regain Perfection," April 1994). "The Brain" is right—Curt needs to do some different things to return to former glories. I hope Hennig can do it, for when he's wrestling well, virtually nobody can touch him.

But Curt doesn't have to turn rulebreaker to become a champion



Curt Hennig has a fan in reader Darrell Wilcox, who says Bobby Heenan is right in stating that "Mr. Perfect" must change in order to return to greatness.



Tatanka has the raw talent and ability to beat foes like Ludvig Borga, says reader Willis Downes, who thinks the Native American needs to bear down with a more determined effort if he's ever going to beat tougher opponents.

again. His recent problems resulted from a lack of intensity, and maybe the time he took off will cure that. I, and other fans of "Mr. Perfect," hope that's the case.

DARRÉLL WILCOX
Lackey, VA

BRAWLING BROTHERS

Despite all the attention the Bret Hart-Owen Hart feud is drawing in the WWF, brother against brother is nothing new in pro wrestling. Ron and Jimmy Garvin had their differences in the NWA. Eddie and Doug Gilbert have feuded on the independent circuit. The legendary Bastien brothers, Red and Lou, often bickered during their tag team bouts. Randy Savage and Lanny Poffo wrestled

each other in Memphis.

Owen's frustrations are understandable. Bret has held every available title in the WWF. He is recognized as the best mat technician around today. However, Owen shouldn't forget his formidable aerial repertoire—something Bret lacks. At his age, Owen has the time to equal or exceed Bret's achievements, given the proper opportunities.

This brotherly feud upsets me only because it negates a Harts-Steiners match for the foreseeable future. For now, we're left to wonder. Does Owen possess the Hart to raise significant Cain against his brethren when he is Abel?

RICHARD EVANS
Gulfport, MS

NOT A MAJOR THREAT

Like a lot of fans, I was thrilled to see Tatanka come back after he was beaten and injured by Ludvig Borga. The Native American had crowd support strongly on his side when he finally recovered from his injuries and sought revenge on the Finnish nightmare.

Well, he did okay against Borga, Kwang the Ninja, and a few other rulebreakers, but he's struggled against the WWF's upper-echelon competition. Specifically, he's been thoroughly dominated by Yokozuna.

Tatanka is a wonderful role model for all Native Americans, but he has to realize that cheers alone will not win him any championships. He's got to get very serious about his wrestling and focus himself much better.

With a more determined effort, I think Tatanka could even beat someone as mighty and massive as Yokozuna.

WILLIS DOWNES
Old Forge, NY □

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On The Road

(Continued from page 10)



Wendi Richter and Luna Vachon have both helped to make women's wrestling more popular, but Harding could give the sport a bigger boost. So far, she hasn't accepted All-Japan's offer.

the eyes of the American public. A lackluster eighth-place finish at the Lillehammer Games, where she cried for an opportunity to skate again after a piece of her equipment broke, hardly endeared her to the international market.

Is Harding actually under the misconception that there are dozens of million-dollar offers awaiting her? Aside from the obligatory TV-movie deal, the only people knocking on her door have been reporters. One, from a tabloid television show, secured a one-on-one interview with Harding for a reported \$675,000. Another, Connie Chung of CBS News, also sat down with Harding for a consid-

erably smaller amount—nothing.

But the lack of endorsement deals are just the beginning of Harding's cash flow problems. She has to have incurred enormous legal fees in battling the United States Figure Skating Association for her right to compete. Ultimately, a plea bargain forced her to give up her amateur skating career. When the All-Japan Women offer was made, she had still planned to take part in the World Championships in Chiba, Japan. But that's off the boards now.

In theory, Harding could still skate professionally. But let's face it—she hardly has the pristine per-

sonality most ice shows are seeking. Unless someone plans to produce *Reality Bites On Ice*, Harding probably will never skate for money. That's why she should give Matsunaga a listen, because his evaluation of her skills is less off-base than you think.

The same qualities that hold back Harding in figure skating would serve as assets in pro wrestling. She has been criticized for her lack of grace on the ice, but has overcome that with awesome athletic ability. Her clearly defined biceps, which undoubtedly cost her beauty points in the eyes of skating judges, would prove useful in the often-ugly confines of the squared circle. The jumps she executes upon a slippery surface with only the reassurance of a metal blade a quarter-inch wide would make landing on canvas in a pair of flat-bottomed boots seem effortless.

And the events of 1994 have erased all doubts concerning her resiliency. Harding has bounced back more times than a congressman's personal check.

"She's as tough as they come," Matsunaga said, "and she'll last a lot longer in our sport than figure skating."

On that count, there is no argument. All-Japan Women has rented the Tokyo Dome for a November 10 card that already figures to be the biggest women's wrestling card in history. A Harding debut there could easily fill the 63,000-seat facility. The resulting publicity could also do more to popularize women's wrestling in North America than the career accomplishments of Fabulous Moolah, Wendi Richter, and Alundra Blayze combined. Is that fair? No, but life isn't fair. If it was, Bonnie Blair would have the lion's share of post-Olympic endorsements.

You want a break, Tonya? Well, here it is, baby, the San Andreas fault. Breaks don't come any bigger than this. Hang up the skates. Put on the boots. ☐

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Behind the Door

(Continued from page 12)



Now Hyatt is Shane Douglas' "head cheerleader" in the new World Wrestling Network. There's only one catch: Douglas is managed by Sherri Martel in ECW. Sherri sharing Shane with Missy? Sounds like trouble.

Douglas (although she would look great in a cheerleader's outfit). She wants to manage Douglas, as she did The Nasty Boys.

"I'll be Shane's cheerleader if he wants, but I can be much more," Hyatt told *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Weekly*. "He knows it, too."

Now, it's impossible to say what Missy means by that. Maybe "more" means being Douglas' girlfriend. Maybe it means being a friend. Or maybe it means becoming his manager and taking a cut of his income. That would be Missy's biggest mistake; Sherri has been known to be very protective of the men she associated with.

"Sherri won't stand for it," said a WWN insider. "The only reason Missy was billed as Douglas' cheerleader was because Douglas was concerned about what Sherri might think. Actually, he wasn't concerned about what she might think. He knows what she'll think: She'll take it as a threat and then she'll come out fighting."

Speaking for the male wrestling fans of the world, I'd hate to see Missy with even the smallest bruise on her body. I think Missy should do everything possible to keep her body as unscathed as possible. The best way for her to do that would be to find another wrestler to cheer for.

Missy is a headhunter in the business sense. Sherri is a headhunter in the primitive sense. Survival of the fittest means Sherri wins, and I don't care who looks better than whom.

Good luck to Jim Crockett with the WWN, his latest venture. He'll need all the luck he can get.

Crockett's first good move was using the cozy Manhattan Center as his venue for TV tapings. His second good move was acquiring a good talent roster that will give the WWN instant credibility. Now comes the hard part: proving to people and TV affiliates that it's worth their time and money to watch, or carry, an independent federation when the WWF and WCW are available options.

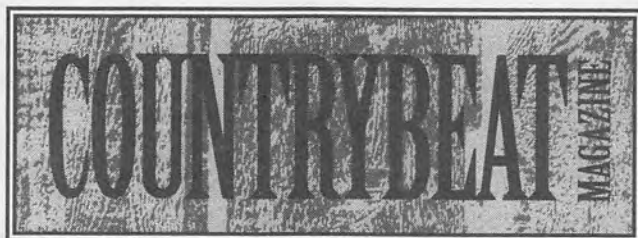
There have been several successful independent federations. World Class Wrestling worked for a while in Texas, the UWF was a powerhouse in Louisiana, the USWA has a stronghold in Tennessee and Kentucky, and ECW is making waves in Philadelphia. These indies have remained afloat by maintaining reasonable goals and budgets. They don't offer million-dollar contracts and hold major pay-per-view extravaganzas. Instead, they offer quality entertainment at a reasonable price.

Not too long ago, independents operated predominately in small cities. That, too, is changing, with ECW in Philly and the WWN in New York (though it plans to also hold cards in the Carolinas).

The little guys are taking on the big guns. Maybe things will be different this time. □

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The Insider

(Continued from page 14)

devoted to "rulebreakers" a feasible idea was nearly laughed out of the office. "No one wants to read about those guys," Bill Apter said to me one day. "And if you want to keep your job, you better start to diversify."

I looked at Bill, at the reflection off his shiny head, his peeling skin, his pockets of flab—the offspring of Richard Simmons and Humpty Dumpty—and shook my head in pity. They just don't get it, I said to myself. And they didn't. Not even Stu Saks, whom I counted as a friend and editorial ally.

After another petition was unanimously overruled, Stu decided to do me the favor of explaining management's point of view. "You have to understand," he said sincerely, "that they feel they have a moral obligation to put wrestling's best foot forward."

This was the last straw. "Look at the people we're celebrating!" I screamed. Rhodes was a fat, self-serving piglet. Hogan was a talentless muscle-head. Morton and Gibson were soft-bellied halfwits. We all know about the Von Erichs—devout Christians wrapped in fake collars. False idols, every single one of them.

The men I admired were of such superior character it was laughable. "They cheat in the ring," the editors said about Stan Hansen and Bruiser Brody and The Road Warriors, as if every man on the most popular list didn't "cheat" just as much.

I took the criticism, the death threats, the personal insults, and persevered through writing. Then a funny thing started to happen.

Rulebreakers started hearing

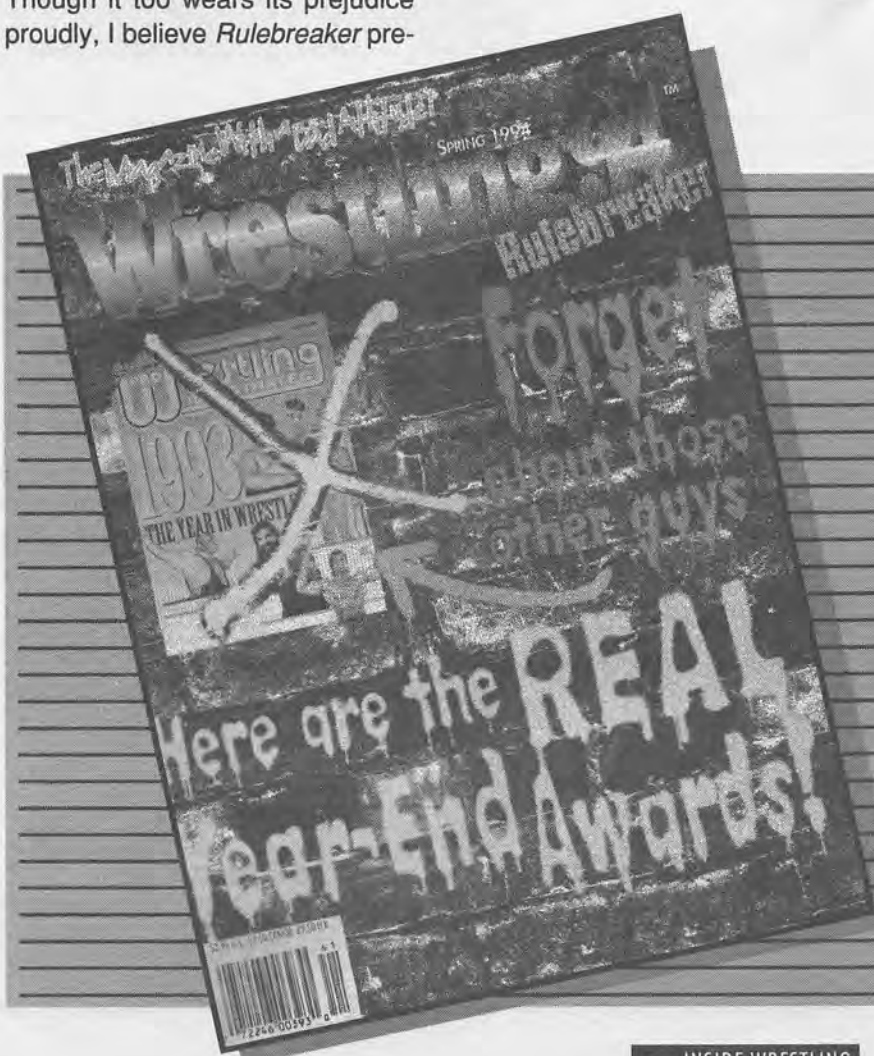
cheers. The more vicious the assault, the louder the cheers got. Suddenly bad was good. Evil was popular. And the publishers sheepishly agreed that perhaps a magazine examining the other side could turn a profit after all.

It's been a year, four issues worth, since *Wrestling 93* (now 94): *Rulebreaker* hit the newsstands. It's been exhausting to maintain standards. Each issue is a battle to keep the editorial posture that dominates this and every other wrestling magazine from infecting our pages, but it's been worth every agonizing minute. Though it too wears its prejudice proudly, I believe *Rulebreaker* pre-

sents a balanced portrait of wrestling—not the insane black-white/good-evil perpetuated for years by promoters, announcers, and reporters.

There are sales figures to track now, and the pressure to maintain profitability is intense if we are to survive. "The bottom line is," Apter loves to remind me, "the second you go in the red, the magazine is dead."

I admire Bill so much that I want the next issue of *Rulebreaker* to include a Bill Apter dartboard centerfold. The editors won't hear of it. The battle continues. □



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December 1989/CENTERFOLD: Jimmy Snuka. **Luger**, Vicious, Muta, Sting, Beefcake & Hogan, Tully & Arn.
January 1990/CENTERFOLD: Sid Vicious. **Ultimate**, Cornette, Ross, Kerry.
February 1990/CENTERFOLD: Bret Hart. **Lex Luger**, Hogan, Hennig-Beefcake, Toni Adams, Woman.
April 1990/CENTERFOLD: Dusty Rhodes. **Ric Flair**, Hennig vs. Hogan, Sting, Rockers, Lawler.
June 1990/CENTERFOLD: Sting. **Hogan vs. Warrior**, R&R Express, Rhodes vs. Savage, Arn vs. Sawyer.
July 1990/CENTERFOLD: Rick Martel. **Lex Luger**, Beefcake, Skyscrapers, Heenan, Saito, referees.

September 1990/CENTERFOLD: Rick & Scott Steiner. **Hogan**, Sting, Horsemen, Hennig.
October 1990/CENTERFOLD: Brutus Beefcake. **Sting**, Tugboat, Ultimate, Long, Blanchard-Orndorff.
November 1990/CENTERFOLD: Legion of Doom. **Sting beats Flair**, Rude-Warrior.
April 1991/CENTERFOLD: Tom Zenk. **Sgt. Slaughter**, Hogan & Warrior, Magnum T.A., Lawler-Gilbert.
May 1991/CENTERFOLD: Arn Anderson. **Hogan**, Rude, Flair-Sting, Thesz.
July 1991/CENTERFOLD: Brian Pillman. **Hogan**, Luger, Demolition, Embry, Horsemen-Vicious.
October 1991/CENTERFOLD: Lex Luger. **Justice**, Hogan-Slaughter, Windham, Williams.
November 1991/CENTERFOLD: Bobby Eaton. **Savage & Elizabeth**, Bushwhackers, Liger, Pillman.
December 1991/CENTERFOLD: Rick Steamboat. **PWI 500**, Simmons, Badd, Hogan-Flair.
January 1992/CENTERFOLD: Ron Simmons. **Flair**, R. Steiner, Ultimate, Luger.
February 1992/CENTERFOLD: 1992 calendar. **Hogan**, Gilbert, Roberts-Justice, hot prospects.
June 1992/CENTERFOLD: Dustin Rhodes. **Piper** interview, Abdullah-Cactus, Flair-Savage, Justice.
July 1992/CENTERFOLD: Randy Savage. **Best of the Best**, Flair, U.S.-Japan, Savage.
September 1992/CENTERFOLD: Nikita Koloff. **Sting-Savage**, Justice, Backlund, Steiners, Michaels.
November 1992/CENTERFOLD: The Ultimate Warrior. **British Bulldog**,

Undertaker, Steiners, Honky Tonk Man interview.
December 1992/CENTERFOLD: Big Van Vader. **PWI 500**, Bossman-Nailz, Watt & WCW rules, Justice interview.
January 1993/CENTERFOLD: Jeff Jarrett. **Flair/SummerSlam**, Simmons by Bowden, Von Erich interview.
February 1993/CENTERFOLD: Curt Hennig. **Ramon**, Snuka-Muraco, Rude, Rhodes, Roberts interview.
April 1993/CENTERFOLD: Barry Windham. **Steiners**, Backlund, Sting-Muta, Hawk-Sasaki.
May 1993/CENTERFOLD: Undertaker. **WrestleMania IX pre-view**, Cactus Jack, Madusa-Sherri.
June 1993/CENTERFOLD: Razor Ramon. **Flair**, Race-Vader, Lawler-Hennig, Kamala, WWF's egoists.
July 1993/CENTERFOLD: Davey Boy Smith. **Hulk Hogan**, Vader, Yokozuna, Hart, Slamboree, Flair-Rude.
September 1993/CENTERFOLD: Paul Orndorff. **Sting & Hogan**, Luger, Sherri-Shango, Blonds.
October 1993/CENTERFOLD: Marty Jannetty. **WWF Midyear Report**, Vicious, Anderson, Hart-Hogan.
November 1993/CENTERFOLD: Steiners. **WCW Midyear Report**, Doink, Funk-Gilbert, Race, Yokozuna.
December 1993/CENTERFOLD: Bret Hart. **PWI 500**, Luger, Davey Boy Smith, Cactus Jack.
January 1994/CENTERFOLD: Jerry Lawler. **Doink**, Nasty Boys, Steiners, Cornette, Vicious.
February 1994/CENTERFOLD: Sid Vicious. **PWI or WCW—Who's Better?** Race-Rhodes, Hogan-Muta, Hart.

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On Assignment

(Continued from page 16)

business. I don't get involved. You don't see me lending them my truck."

Tough love indeed!

"Tough love?" Mr. G laughs. "You know my son. You think it's been a picnic all these years?"

What does the man whose victory instigated the mess in the first place think of it all?

"I think it's disgraceful but entirely in character," says Jerry Lawler. "The truth is I would have given the van back to the old lady. Gilbert doesn't care about anyone. You judge a man by the way he treats his family. In a lot of ways, Gilbert is the scariest man in wrestling."

"Eddie is a living doll," says guess who. "He has a job that requires him to take risks and I want him to feel I will support him 100 percent of the time. Not 50 or 75—100 percent!"

Surely, Mrs. Gilbert, in Eddie's long and notorious career, hasn't the boy done something that you were ashamed of? He has a list of enemies at least a mile wide, a resume of violence and rulebreaking unsurpassed in his region. There must be something, something he's done that you just couldn't tolerate.

Mrs. Gilbert is silent for a long time. "I can't think of any," she finally says. "Excuse me, but I've got to go. My bus is coming."

After talking with the Gilberts, I headed over to western North Carolina to watch Tammy Fytch wrestle on a Smoky Mountain card. You could call it the female equivalent of Michael Jordan trying out for the White Sox: ludicrous.

While I don't always care for her tactics, I've always admired Fytch's feistiness. Hey, I know



Photo by Scott George

Eddie hasn't bought his mother another van, but she's not complaining. She's more concerned with his health and his safety when he tangles with a bitter rival such as Lawler.

what it's like to be a bright woman in the wrestling world. It's not easy.

But managing and wrestling are apples and oranges, or should I say apples and eggs. Tammy laid one of the latter while facing "Dirty White Girl" Kimberly as part of a

mixed tag team match. Kimberly's not much of a wrestler, but compared to Fytch she was Fabulous Moolah and Alundra Blayze rolled into one.

Rumor has it Tammy's sticking to managing for good. I, for one, certainly hope so. □

Inside Wrestling

BACK ISSUES OF

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February 1985/Stories include: Rich, Adams, Valiant, Flair.
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May 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Garvin, Albano, Koloffs.
June 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Slaughter, Von Erichs, Studd & Paterra.
July 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Nikita, Warriors.
October 1985/Stories include: Russian menace, Von Erichs, Rude & Barr.
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February 1986/Stories include: R'n'R Express, Warriors, Mulligan & Windham.
April 1986/Stories include: Scott Hall, Rhodes, Flair, Andre, Bill Watts.
May 1986/Stories include: Randy Savage, Stan Hansen, Rock 'n' Roll.
June 1986/Stories include: Bulldogs, Windham-Flair, Lance Von, Blanchard.
July 1986/All-American Special Issue. Stories include: Hogan, Slaughter, T.A.
September 1986/Stories include: Andre, Rhodes, T.A., Adams, Windham.
October 1986/Stories include: Flair-Luger, Savage, Fantastics, Warriors.
November 1986/Stories include: Warriors-Flair, Bulldogs, Watts, Adams.
December 1986/Stories include: Hogan-Adonis, R&R Express, Baby Doll.
January 1987/Stories include: Rude-Flair, Piper, T.A., Taylor.
February 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Piper-Orndorff, Taylor, Flair.
March 1987/Stories include: Flair, Missy, Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.
April 1987/Stories include: Windham, Steamboat, Ellering, Duggan.
May 1987/Stories include: Windham & Luger, Steamboat, Hogan-Andre.
June 1987/Stories include: Piper-Adonis, Horsemen, Adams, Hall, Brody.
August 1987/Stories include: Dusty & Nikita, Hogan, Mike Von, Cornette.

September 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Race, R&R Exp., Rich, Honky Tonk.
October 1987/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Taylor-Adams, Lawler.
November 1987/Stories include: War Games, Mr. T, Bulldogs, Rhodes.
December 1987/Stories include: Freebirds, Rhodes, Magnum, Savage, Perez.
January 1988/Stories include: R&R-Horsemen, Hogan, Flair-Garvin.
February 1988/Stories include: Savage, Kevin Von, Sting, Tully & Arn.
March 1988/Stories include: Bigelow, Adams, Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.
April 1988/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Andre-Hogan-DiBiase.
May 1988/Stories include: Zbyszko, DiBiase, Warriors, Rockers, Fritz Von.
June 1988/Stories include: Warriors, Savage, R&R Express, Baby Doll.
July 1988/Stories include: Hogan-Savage-DiBiase, Kerry & Hayes, Sting.
August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Missy Hyatt, Sting, Hayes, Honky Tonk.
October 1988/Stories include: Megapowers vs. Megabucks, Horsemen, Lawler.
November 1988/Stories include: Rhodes, Kerry, Luger, Muraco, Freebirds.
December 1988/Stories include: Powers of Pain, Ultimate, Flair, Piper.
January 1989/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Sting, Arn, Kerry-Lawler.
February 1989/Stories include: Hogan-Bossman, Tully & Arn, Warriors & Sting.
March 1989/Stories include: Hennig, Midnight-Midnights, Ultimate.
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July 1989/Stories include: Savage, Windham, Kerry, Demolition, Sting.
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October 1989/Stories include: Hall & Pillman & Vicious, Hennig, Rhodes.
November 1989/Stories include: Elizabeth, Sting, Luger, Paul E., Mascaras.
December 1989/Stories include: Rhodes, Flair, Hogan-Zeus, Embry.

January 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Sting-Flair, Roberts-DiBiase.
February 1990/Stories include: Warriors-Skyscrapers, Zenk, Rude-Piper.
April 1990/Stories include: Starrcade '89, Ultimate, Rhodes, Sawyer.
May 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Ultimate, Luger, Woman, Lawler, LPWA.
June 1990/Stories include: Sting, Saito-Zbyszko, Earthquake, Ultimate, Jarrett.
July 1990/Stories include: Steiners, Sting, Warrior & Hogan, Earthquake.
August 1990/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Hogan, Warrior, Taylor.
September 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Duggan, JYD, Adams, Horsemen.
October 1990/Stories include: Sting, Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, Gigante.
November 1990/Stories include: Flair, Hogan, Vicious, Slaughter, Orient.
December 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Sting, Kerry, Cornette, Zbyszko.
January 1991/Stories include: LOD, Adams, Steiners, Lawler-Funk.
February 1991/Stories include: Taylor, Hogan, Martel, Sting, all-annoying team.
March 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Earthquake, Roberts-Martel, Sting.
April 1991/Stories include: Flair-Sting, Steiners, Piper, Zbyszko, Slaughter.
May 1991/Stories include: Savage-Warrior, Steiners, Sting, Virgil.
June 1991/Stories include: Steiners, LOD, Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees.
July 1991/Stories include: Hogan, Virgil, Funk, Nastys, Steiners, Spivey.
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October 1992/Stories include: SummerSlam, Steiner-Muta, Simmons.
November 1992/Stories include: Flair, Warrior, Vader, top rope rule.
December 1992/Stories include: Flair, Ramon, Heavenly Bodies, Jarrett.
February 1993/Stories include: LOD, Smoky Mountain, Rude, Jimmy Hart.
March 1993/Stories include: Michaels, Nikita, Koloff, Windham-Rhodes.
April 1993/Stories include: New blood, Paul E., Sting-Vader, Flair, changing faces.
May 1993/Stories include: WrestleMania IX analysis, Andre tribute, Muta.
June 1993/Stories include: Doink, Vader-Sting, Jimmy Hart, Steiners, Lawler.
July 1993/Stories include: Bravo, Gonzales, Bulldog, Ramon, Arn, Tatanka.
August 1993/Stories include: Christopher-Michaels, Hogan-Yokozuna, Hart.
September 1993/Stories include: Steiners, Slamboree, Ramon, Sting & Smith, Hart.
October 1993/Stories include: Money Inc., Hart-Lawler, SummerSlam, Vader-Vicious.
November 1993/Stories include: Bodies, Jannetty, Rude-Flair, Hogan, Luger.
December 1993/Stories include: Austin, Luger, Sting & Flair, Yokozuna, Luna.
February 1994/Stories include: Holiday gifts, Blonds, Hogan, Duggan, Doinks.
March 1994/Stories include: Parker, Predictions, Hyatt, Borge, Flair-Roma.
May 1994/Stories include: Flair-Rude, Luger & Hart, Booger-Yokozuna.
June 1994/Stories include: Steamboat-Flair, Blayze, IRS, Bruise Bros.

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14—TERRY FUNK

(-) ECW heavyweight champion

15—BIG VAN VADER

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2—STEVE AUSTIN

(2) 241, Dallas, TX

3—STEVE REGAL

(3) 247, Blackpool, England

4—STING

(4) 260, Venice Beach, CA

5—BIG VAN VADER

(5) 450, Denver, CO

6—RICK STEAMBOAT

(6) 238, Honolulu, HI

7—JOHNNY B. BADD

(15) 235, Macon, GA

8—RICK RUDE

(7) 246, Robbinsdale, MN

9—MAXX PAYNE

(-) 350, Iowa City, IA

10—DUSTIN RHODES

(8) 254, Austin, TX

11—RON SIMMONS

(11) 260, Perry, GA

12—THE BOSS

(9) 310, Cobb County, GA

13—ARN ANDERSON

(10) 249, Minneapolis, MN

14—THE PATRIOT

(12) 251, Columbia, SC

15—JUNGLE JIM STEELE

(13) 243, Okeechobee, Florida

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(3) 235, Calgary, Alberta

2—RAZOR RAMON

(2) 291, Minneapolis, MN

3—OWEN HART

(8) 223, Calgary, Alberta

4—YOKOZUNA

(1) 550, Samoa

5—LEX LUGER

(6) 290, Chicago, IL

6—SHAWN MICHAELS

(7) 220, San Antonio, TX

7—RANDY SAVAGE

(5) 245, Sarasota, FL

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(15) 462, Montreal, Quebec

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(4) 260, Miami, FL

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(10) 235, parts unknown

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Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated

13—JEFF JARRETT

Last issue: No. 11 Most Hated

14—BRIAN LEE

Last issue: No. 15 Most Hated

15—BAM BAM BIGELOW

Last issue: No. 14 Most Hated

TOP 15

1—THE QUEBECERS

(1) WWF World tag team champions

2—THE NASTY BOYS

(2) WCW World tag team champions

3—MEN ON A MISSION

(13) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

4—MARCUS BAGWELL & 2 COLD SCORPIO

(-) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

5—STING & RICK STEAMBOAT

(-) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

6—THE MOONDOGS

(7) USWA tag team champions

7—THE HEAVENLY BODIES

(5) Smoky Mountain tag team champions

8—JERRY LAWLER & BRIAN CHRISTOPHER

(8) No. 1 contenders: USWA tag title

9—THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS

(10) No. 1 contenders: Smoky Mountain tag title

10—THE BUSHWHACKERS

(-) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

11—RICK & SCOTT STEINER

(4) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

12—THE HEADSHRINKERS

(14) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

13—THE SMOKIN' GUNNS

(-) No. 5 contenders: WWF World tag title

14—TERRY AUSTIN & AUSTIN STEELE

(-) PWF tag team champions

15—THE PUBLIC ENEMY

(12) ECW tag team champions

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue... "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices ... Championships highlighted in bold on the "Roll Call Of Champions" have changed hands since our previous issue ... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ending March 21, 1994

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

AAA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: EL HIJO DEL SANTO & OCTAGON
(November 5, 1993; defeated Love Machine & Eddy Guerrero; Tonalá, Mexico)
ALL-JAPAN ASIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: DAN KROFFAT & DOUG FURNAS
(September 9, 1993; from The Patriot & The Eagle; Omiya, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSUWARA MISAWA
(August 22, 1992; from Stan Hansen; Tokyo, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MASANOBU FUCHI
(January 25, 1994; from Dan Kroffat; Miyagi, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MITSUWARA MISAWA & KENTA KOBASHI
(December 3, 1993; defeated Akira Tase & Toshiaki Kawada in tournament final; Tokyo, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSUWARA MISAWA
(August 22, 1992; from Stan Hansen; Tokyo, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S ALL-PACIFIC CHAMPION: TOSHIYO YAMADA
(November 28, 1993; defeated Minami Toyota; Osaka, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: MIMA SHIMODA
(September 18, 1993; from Bat Yoshinaga; Omiya, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: AJA KONG
(November 26, 1992; from Bull Nakano; Kawasaki, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CANDY OKUTSU
(December 6, 1993; from Chapparrito Asari; Osaka, Japan)
ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: DYNAMITE KANSAI & MAYUMI OZAKI
(December 6, 1993; from Minami Toyota & Toshiyo Yamada; Osaka, Japan)
ALL STATES WRESTLING JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BOBBIE FIELDS
(October 14, 1993; from Charles Long; Maryville, TN)
AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RIP SAWYER
(November 6, 1993; from Max Thrasher; Steelton, PA)
AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: LORD ZOLTAN
(November 6, 1993; from Quinn Nash; Steelton, PA)
AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE BAD CREW
(September 30, 1993; title previously vacant; York, PA)
AMERICAN STATES WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SCOTT SOMERS
(November 19, 1993; from Bo Dacious; Mansfield, OH)
ASWA LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CHAD AUSTIN
(November 14, 1993; from Joe Colledge; Essex, MD)
ATLANTIC WRESTLING COUNCIL LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION: BOBBY ROGERS
(December 4, 1993; from Blare Rogers; Hollywood, FL)
ATLANTIC WRESTLING COUNCIL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: T.J. JACKSON & THE MISER
(July 2, 1993; from American Scorpion & The Falcon; West Palm Beach, FL)
CAROLINA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MITCH RYDER
(January 15, 1994; from Kahn the Warlord; Durham, NC)
CAROLINA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE COUNTRY CLUB
(December 4, 1993; from The East-West Connection; Smithfield, NC)
CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TONY ATLAS
(December 4, 1993; from Vic Steamboat; Tewksbury, MA)
CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RAY ODYSSEY
(December 4, 1993; from El Mascara; Tewksbury, MA)
CONTINENTAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: VIC STEAMBOAT
(October 23, 1993; from The Iron Sheik; Wakefield, MA)
CONTINENTAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RAY ODYSSEY
(October 23, 1993; from Flex Lavender; Wakefield, MA)
ECW CHAMPION: TERRY FUNK
(December 26, 1993; from Sabu; Philadelphia, PA)
ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE PUBLIC ENEMY
(March 6, 1994; from Kevin Sullivan & Tasmaniac; Philadelphia, PA)
ECW TELEVISION CHAMPION: J.T. SMITH
(March 6, 1994; from Tasmaniac; Philadelphia, PA)
GWF HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CHRIS ADAMS
(December 25, 1993; from Icarus Parsons; Dallas, TX)
GWF TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BLACK BART & JOHN HAWK
(December 25, 1993; Chaz Taylor & Steven Dane; Dallas, TX)
ICWA CHAMPION: JUMBO BARRETTA
(September 23, 1993; from Cuban Assassin; Tampa, FL)
IWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: VLADIMIR KOLOFF
(October 17, 1992; battle royal final over Thunderfoot II; Girard, OH)
IWA INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: BARRY HOROWITZ
(October 23, 1993; from Preston Steele; Warren, OH)
IWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE HELD UP
(Most recently held by The Thunderfoots)
IWC HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CIEN CARAS
(November 13, 1993; defeated Konnan; San Jose, CA)

IWCCW LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JOE SAVOLDI
(December 26, 1991; from The Tasmaniac; Monticello, NY)
IWCCW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE SIOUX WAR PARTY
(May 9, 1992; tournament final over The Canadians; Hamburg, PA)
IWGP CHAMPION: SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(September 20, 1993; from The Great Muta; Nagoya, Japan)
IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: KENSUKE SASAKI & HAWK
(January 4, 1994; from Scott Norton & Hercules; Tokyo, Japan)
IWGP JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JUSHIN UGER
(January 4, 1993; from Ultimo Dragon; Tokyo, Japan)
MEWF HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE: LUCIFER
(November 14, 1993; from Morgus the Maniac; Essex, MD)
PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION CHAMPION: MITSUWARA MISAWA
(August 22, 1992; from Stan Hansen; Tokyo, Japan)
PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
MITSUWARA MISAWA & KENTA KOBASHI
(December 3, 1993; defeated Akira Tase & Toshiaki Kawada in tournament final; Tokyo, Japan)
PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: ITALIAN STALLION
(January 22, 1994; from Austin Steele; Taylorsville, NC)
PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: CRUEL CONNECTION II
(February 12, 1994; from American G.I.; Point Pleasant, WV)
PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: GEORGE SOUTH
(January 14, 1994; from Star Ryder; Hamlet, NC)
PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TERRY AUSTIN & AUSTIN STEELE
(February 4, 1994; from Italian Stallion & Star Ryder; Elkin, NC)
SMOKY MOUNTAIN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TONY ANTHONY
(February 13, 1994; from Brian Lee; Knoxville, TN)
SMOKY MOUNTAIN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE HEAVENLY BODIES
(February 19, 1994; from The Rock 'n' Roll Express; Port Huron, MI)
SMOKY MOUNTAIN U.S. JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CHRIS CANDIDO
(November 13, 1993; from Bobby Blaze; Morristown, TN)
TENNESSEE ALL-STAR WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TOMMY RICH
(September 23, 1993; from Buddy Landell; Maryville, TN)
TENNESSEE ALL-STAR WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: PAUL RAY & JOHNNY RAYNOR
(September 23, 1993; from Tom Piller & Deke Rivers; Maryville, TN)
USWA CHAMPION: EDDIE GILBERT
(February 14, 1994; from Jerry Lawler; Memphis, TN)
USWA SOUTHERN CHAMPION: EDDIE GILBERT
(March 14, 1994; from Brian Christopher; Memphis, TN)
USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MOONDOGS
(January 31, 1994; from The Rock 'n' Roll Express; Memphis, TN)
WCW TELEVISION CHAMPION: LORD STEVEN REGAL
(September 19, 1993; from Rick Steamboat; Houston, TX)
WCW U.S. CHAMPION: STEVE AUSTIN
(December 27, 1993; from Dustin Rhodes; Charlotte, NC)
WCW WORLD CHAMPION: RIC FLAIR
(December 27, 1993; from Big Van Vader; Charlotte, NC)
WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE NASTY BOYS
(October 24, 1993; from 2 Cold Scorpio & Marcus Alexander Bagwell; New Orleans, LA)
WINDY CITY WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE SMITH BROTHERS
(November 13, 1993; from The Twin Turbos; Greenville, IL)
WING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CRYPT KEEPER
(August 31, 1993; from Crash the Terminator; Akita, Japan)
WORLD WIDE WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: NAILZ
(September 24, 1993; tournament final over Max Moon; Harleysville, PA)
WORLD WIDE WRESTLING ALLIANCE INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: JACK HAMMER
(August 27, 1993; from Tony Atlas; Freeport, Bahamas)
WORLD WIDE WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE BUSHWHACKERS
(February 11, 1994; from The Diamond Express; North Towanda, PA)
WWA FRONTIER MARTIAL ARTS CHAMPION: MR. ONITA
(September 19, 1992; from Tiger Jeet Singh; Yokohama, Japan)
WWA FRONTIER MARTIAL ARTS TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TARZAN GOTO & GREGORY VERICHEV
(May 24, 1992; from Horace Boulder & Sabu; Tokyo, Japan)
WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: RAZOR RAMON
(September 27, 1993; tournament final over Rick Martel; New Haven, CT)
WWF WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: ALUNDRA BLAYZE
(December 13, 1993; tournament final over Heidi Lee Morgan; Poughkeepsie, NY)
WWF WORLD CHAMPION: BRET HART
(March 20, 1994; from Yokozuna; New York, NY)
WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE QUEBECERS
(January 17, 1994; from The Kid & Marty Jannetty; New York, NY)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

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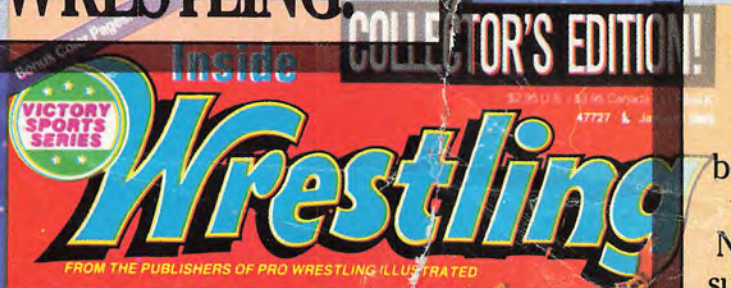


MIKE DiBIASE vs. DORY FUNK SR.

May 1959

Ever wonder where dastardly Texans like Ted DiBiase, Dory Funk Jr., and Terry Funk learned their devious ways? They obviously took lessons from their famous fathers. In this photo, taken in Amarillo, Texas, Ripper Leone pushes his pal "Iron" Mike DiBiase out of the dressing room, urging him to continue his battle with archival Dory Funk Sr. amongst some interested observers.

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